CHRISTIAN SOBRIETY:

EIGHT SERMOR

TITUS II. 6.

PREACHED WITH A SPECIAL VIEW

TO THE

BENEFIT OF THE YOUNG MEN

PUBLIC WORSHIP USUALLY ATTENDING THE

THE

WEST CHURCH in BOSTON.

Published more particularly at their Desire, and dedicated to them.

By JONATHAN MAYHEW, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE SAID CHURCH.



MAKE no tarrying to turn to the LORD, and put not off from day to day; for fuddenly shall the wrath of the LORD come forth, and in thy fecurity thou shalt be destroyed --- My son, gather instruction from thy Youth up: So shalt thou find wisdom till thine OLD AGE. IESUS the Son of SIRACH.

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The Author Son

To the Young Men who usually attend his Ministry; and, more particularly,

To those of them, at whose REQUEST the following Discourses are published.

My dear young Brethren,

Thave now before me a paper directed to me, figned by a confiderable number of you; in which you express both a full persuasion, and a grateful sense of my friendly design in preaching the follow-lowing sermons: At the same time desiring a copy for the press, in terms at once too respectful to me to behere repeated, and too plainly indicating a serious turn of mind, to permit me to deny your request.

I SHOULD, indeed, do an injury to myfelf, if I denied that my aim in them was, as you suppose, "the bettering your minds and morals." And the manner in which you attended to them, when preached, together with your being so well satisfied with them as to desire to read them in print, affords ground to hope that, by the blessing of God, the fountain of truth, light and wisdom,

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[†] The paper here referred to, was signed by about sifty persons of the younger sort.

faire answered. This agreeable prospect has much alleviated the trouble I have been at in reviewing, correcting and transcribing them; which would otherwise have been a tedious labor to me, especially in so cold and severe a season. But if they are only a quarter part so useful to you as I pray God to make them, I shall be very

amply rewarded.

In composing them, I must own, I had no other fermons in view as a model; which may, perhaps, be one reason that they are no better. They were written intirely from the scriptures, and from my own heart; of the latter of which at least, they are a true, tho' imperfect representation. Least of all had I in view as a model, either the fermons of any bigotted devotees to particular fystems of religion, distinct from the general and glorious one of the gospel; or fuch cold, uninteresting discourses as hit the frivolous taste of those, who value sermons only for an imaginary delicacy of fentiment and expression, without solidity, without force or energy; without entering into the spirit and importance of religion. I do not think mine the worse, for not being imitations of fuch as either of these. The

The former are my aversion, as the illiberal productions of flaves, who defire to tyrannize over other mens consciences t The latter my contempt, as the superficial, infipid, empty harangues of vain men; which do not deferve the name of fermons. If discourses from the pulpit are adapted only to please the ear and the fancy, like many of the modern fashionable ones; ind stead of having a direct tendency to alarm the conscience of a sinner, to warm the heart of a faint, or to enlighten the understandings of any; they serve, in my opinion, to no better purposes, than those of unfeafonably amusing the hearers, difgract ing the places in which, and the persons by whom they are delivered, as frivolous, conceited declaimers; who feek only the applause of men, by their founding brass and tinkling cymbals; instead of defigning to do good, by manifestation of the truth; and commending themselves to every man's conscience in the fight of God. own, I should be a little mortified, as well as greatly disappointed, if any persons who are charmed with fuch lullabies and opiates to the conscience from the pulpit, should think the following discourses in any meas fure tolerable.

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THE fubject is handled in fuch a manner as to give you a general, comprehenfive idea of true religion, with its advantages and importance: I mean, of Christianity, according to my own conceptions of it. The scheme or plan of the sermons is very extensive: It opens a wide field, almost boundless on every side, and presenting numberless objects to the view. Whoever looks over the contents of them, will fee that they are not deficient in point of variety, whatever other faults they may be justly charged with. But, in this way of treating the fubject, it was impossible to handle any particular doctrine or precept of the gospel fully, or with accuracy and precision. Had I pretended to handle the various branches of religion here touched upon, in this manner, each fermon would have fwelled to a folio; and they must have employed more years than I was days, in composing and preaching them.

The general design of them, viz. to instruct the Young, and, by the blessing of God, to form their minds to the love and practice of true religion, cannot but be approved by all wise and good men; how much soever I have failed in the method, or execution. The instruction of the Young, in order to their being well principled, and acting a proper part in life, is a thing of the utmost importance to themselves and to society. This has, accordingly, been a favourite, a principal object with some of the wisest men, in their respective ages and countries. Three such persons in particular, at once present themselves to my mind; Solomon, Socrates and Cicero.

The first of these, Solomon among the Jews, had a very particular attention to the Young, in his invaluable writings; a treasure more to be prized than millions of gold and silver. He himself informs us, and it is obvious from the most cursory view of them, that their more immediate and special design was, "to give to the Young Man knowledge and understanding."

The second, Socrates, so renowned among the Greeks for his wisdom and virtue, is also known to have devoted his time and great talents, chiefly to the instruction of Young Men. Tho' he left nothing in writing, which is come down to us; yet authentic history gives us this account of him: And the dialogues of Plato, his learned disciple, in which the sentiments

fentiments and discourses of Socrates are reprefented, clearly evince the fame thing. He was, however, in that superstitious, corrupt and idolatrous, tho' polite age, accufed, tried and condemned as a perverter of the Youth of Athens; more particularly, as it is faid, because he taught them the UNITY of God; ridiculing polytheifm, with the numberless superstitions & follies which time, ignorance and prejudice had confecrated, as the facred mysteries of religion; i. e. in other words, he was confidered as an impious heretic and blasphemer. This it was, that enraged the priests, the politicians, and even the poets of ATHENS, against that extraordinary person; and finally brought him, as a martyr for the truth, to drink the fatal hemlock in a jayl: A poor requital for fuch important fervices to his country! But thus it is, that "the world gives;"-thus, that it often rewards its benefactors, of whom it is not worthy. And even the Son of God himself, was by wicked hands crucified and flain as a blasphemer, for afferting that the only true God was his FATHER; thereby making himself, as the priests maliciously accused him, equal with Gop!

CICERO among the ROMANS, the third of these renowned men, the wisest and best of his time and nation, had a special view to the benefit of young MEN, in divers of his admirable writings; particularly in that very valuable book his OF-FICES, inscribed to his fon MARCUS. He also took great pains in some of his other writings, to expose the folly, superstition and knavery of the priests and augurs; and other supposed holy men of those times; and to preserve both the Old and Young from the fad effects of their delufions and hypocrify, tho' he was himfelf One of their order. He was, accordingly, accounted an heretic by them. And tho' he did not fall at last as a martyr directly for true religion; yet he fell as one of the most glorious advocates for LIBERTY, that the world ever faw: An honor next to that of fuffering martyrdom for religion; and, in some fort, the fame thing; true religion comprising in it the love of liberty, and of One's country; and the hatred of all tyranny and oppression.

It is evident, moreover, from the epiftles of the great apostle PAUL, and of

JOHN

JOHN the beloved disciple of our Lord, that both of them had a particular attention to the Young, in their writings: Not to mention the many excellent divines, or other learned and good men, who, in later ages, have devoted a great part of their time, and their noble talents, to the service of God and their generation, in this way. To say the least, therefore, I have no occasion to blush, for having employed my meaner talents with a particular view to the benefit of my YOUNG brethren, when I consider these illustrious examples: Especially, when I also reflect on what passed betwixt our LORD and PETER, when the former, the chief Shepherd, was just ascending to his FATHER and our FATHER, to his GOD and our God. " JESUS faith to Simon " Peter, Simon fon of Jonas, lovest thou " me more than these? He saith unto " him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that " I love thee. He faith unto him, FEED " MY LAMBS."

WHILE others, who are rich in wifdom, cast in of their abundance into the treasury and offerings of God, for the immediate service of the YONUG, the LAMBS

LAMBS of CHRIST's fold; I may be permitted, like the poor widow, of my penury to cast in a mite or two. In which respect, I may also accomodate to myself, and adopt the words of the last-mentioned apostle, PETER, originally spoken with another view, on a particular occafion: "Silver and gold have I none; but fuch as I have give I you." If what I here offer, as my own, is neither gold, filver nor precious stones; yet, I trust, it is not wholly dross, wood, hay or stubble. And, mean as it is, I am already affured, my beloved young brethren, that you will not despise it: Nor do I doubt, but that the infinitely good and merciful God will graciously accept it thro' Jesus CHRIST, as fincerely intended for his glory.

It is faid by some, that these times are very corrupt and degenerate, in comparison of those of our fore-fathers; and particularly, that the Youth of these days are remarkably light and vain, loose and profligate, both in principle and manners. There is doubtless always room, and great occasion in this present evil world, for reformation. I am not certain, however, that the above-mentioned charge

charge is strictly just: Possibly they who bring it, may not " inquire wifely concerning the former times," or the present, when they think that those were fo much " better than these." Be that as it may; yet I am persuaded, the most likely way to produce a reformation, is not to rail at the times, or to make fuch invidious comparisons betwixt the age present, and those which are past. I have, therefore, wholly declined this kind of rhetoric and declamation in these discourfes: Contenting myself with plainly telling you the truth and your duty; and urging it upon you by fuch confiderations, as are at all times proper. But if there is any real foundation for fuch a charge against the Youth of the present age, these discourses will be so much the more seasonable, and claim your attention accordingly.

I have addressed you in them, and endeavoured to treat you, as reasonable creatures. You will not, it is hoped, think it less incumbent upon you to shew yourselves men by your conduct, tho but young, than it was upon me to treat you as such. To the many arguments and motives

motives to that end, used in these discourfes, let me here fubjoin, that a number of you have been blest with a liberal and learned, as well as religious education; and, that the more is expected of you both by God and man, on this account. Take heed, my brethren, that you do not any of you difgrace your education, and bring a reproach upon that respectable fociety the COLLEGE, whose public honors you have received, by a conduct unworthy both of that and yourselves; either by a vicious and profligate, or even by a low, fordid and vulgar behaviour. In either of which cases, especially the former, you may be affured, that what would otherwise be for your honor, will in the end, turn to your shame and reproach. I fay this, you know, as your friend, not as your enemy.

The great regard and kindness with which I have been treated by your parents, and the honoured and beloved people of my pastoral charge in general, lay me under some peculiar obligations, not only to them, but to you; — to do whatever in me lies, to promote your honor, your temporal and eternal good. If, therefore,

fore, you should think my private advice on any particular occasion, or my good wishes and my prayers worth any thing, you may depend upon having them; the former, whenever it is asked, and the two latter without it.

LET me just add, that if any of you, after hearing, and requesting the publication of these discourses on christian sobriety, should conduct yourselves unsoberly, unrighteously and ungodly in the world, instead of living as the grace of GOD which has appeared, teaches you to live; these very sermons, and your own written, figned request, will be as swift witnesses against you: You will be judged out of your own mouths, like wicked fervants; and condemned, as it were, under your own hands and feals. God forbid, that what is now a token for good concerning you, and a testimony in your favor, should eventually be a means of aggravating your guilt, and inflaming your condemnation! As my beloved brethren I warn you; at the fame time hoping "better things of you, and things that accompany falvation:" Being

Your fincere Friend
BOSTON, February NO 61 and Brother,
1763.

Jonathan Mayhew.

THE

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Concernme Their and Call. I.

SERMON I.

Observations on Titus and the Epistle to him. The design and method of the following Discourses exhibited. Remarks on the terms young men, and sober-minded: And, what is implied in exhorting them to be so, particularly shewn.



perform that the golpel was first planted in the stand \mathbf{T}_{i} \mathbf{T}_{i} \mathbf{U}_{i} \mathbf{T}_{i} \mathbf{U}_{i} \mathbf{T}_{i} \mathbf{U}_{i} \mathbf{T}_{i} \mathbf{U}_{i}

Young Men likewise exhort to be sober-

ITUS, to whom the apostle Paul wrote this short, but excellent epistle, is generally supposed to have been converted to the christian faith by his ministry:

And it is doubtless with reference hereto that the apostle calls him "his own son, after the common faith *". Titus being a young man of great hopes, when he first became a disciple of Christ, St. Paul seems to have had a particular kindness

kin dness and regard for him; sometimes taking him with him as his companion and assistant in the kingdom and patience of Christ, while he travelled from country to country, to preach his unsearchable riches among the gentiles. It appears from divers passages in the new testament, that Titus was a person of no small consideration among the Christians of that day, even before he came to reside at Crete; being deputed, sometimes by one apostle or another, and sometimes by an whole church, to transact assairs of great importance to the common cause of christianity; which trusts he seems to have discharged with great ability and reputation.

WHETHER Titus went with St. Paul to Crete, in one of his peregrinations, as feems most probable: And whether it was by his, or the apostle's own ministry, or by that of some other person, that the gospel was first planted in that itland, is not material at prefent to be inquired, or determined. It is still evident that they were, on some occasion or other, both together at this populous island; famous long before that time, as the supposed place of Jupiter's birth; for Minos, its just king; for its labyrinth, its hundred cities, &c. It is now more commonly known by the name of Candy, from its chief city, founded by the Saracens; and at this day fubject to the Turks. It is, morcover, certain that, at the time when St. Paul and Titus were together at Crete, there was a confiderable number of christian converts there; who were, 'tis likely, part Jews by birth, and part Gentiles.

repugnant

It is still farther certain, that the apostle being about to depart from thence, left this excellent person, who had by this time acquired great knowledge and experience, in Crete, to superintend the affairs of the church; to regulate things these, and particularly to ordain elders, or pastors, in all the cities wherein it should be needful. "For this cause left I thee in Crete," says he, "that thou shouldest set in order the "things that are wanting, and ordain elders in "every city, as I had appointed thee". From whence it appears that the church, or churches of Crete, were not hitherto reduced to due form, rule, or order; most, if not all the cities being destitute of regular, fixed pastors, or overseers.

AND here, by the way, it is natural to take notice of a groundless conceit of a modern sect? to the people of which, however, God knoweth, I bear no ill will; and who, in fome other refpects, are rather to be commended, than blamed. The people usually called Quakers, affert that it was never the intention of Christ the "thief fhephetd", or of his inspired apolities. that there should be a certain order of men feparated to the golpel-ministry; or regularly feetled and ordained as pastors, elders, or by whate ever other name they are called, in particular cities and churches. Upon which supposition let them, if they can, give a plain and direct answer to the question, For what end it was, that the apossle Paul lest Titus at Grete? This notion of the Quakers is, in thart, diametrically

B 2.

repugnant to many passages of scripture; and contrary to the known custom in the apostles days, under their own eye and direction, as well as to the fentiments and practice of all Christians in general from that time to the present, the Quakers themselves being excepted, who are but a novel feet. The supposed novelty of this feet would, however, be no folid objection against it, if its tenets and practices were truly apostolic. For whatever bears this stamp and character, has really the most venerable antiquity on its fide; in comparison of which, no other, however gloried in, is of any confideration, But one need not scruple to say, that our modern Quaker-focieties, meetings or lassemblies, wherein there are neither any stated pastors, nor facraments, bear, in that respect, no resemblance of the churches planted by the apostles, their companions, or their immediate followers. In all which churches in general, there were both regular pastors, elders (or bishops) and deacons: And, in them, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper were administred; all nearly according to the present mode and practice of our churches in New-England; tho' I will not prefume to fay, exactly fo in every circumstance.

ST. PAUL wrote this epistle to Titus very soon after he left him at Crete. As is commonly supposed, it was written by him from Maccdonia, about the year of our Lord 65 or 66. He tho't proper, it seems, at once to shew his regard for Titus, and his care for the yet-unformed, unregulated churches of Crete, to send

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him this letter; containing more particular counsels and directions, probably, than he had given him verbally before; that, by having these in his hands in writing, to read, and to communicate to others, they might be the more strictly observed both by him and the churches there, as they were respectively concerned herein. And having reminded Titus, as was before observed, of the general design with which he left him at Crete; he immediately proceeds to give him directions respecting the qualifications which he was to regard in the elders or pastors, to be ordained by him. "If any be blameless," * &c. From whence some have imagined that Titus himself was constituted by the apostle, a bishop, and the first, of Crete, in that sense of the word, in which a bishop is now distinguished from a pastor, elder or presbyter. Others, who suppose that in the new testament, there is no such distinction of order or office, made betwixt them, which is an undeniable and manifest truth; yet suppose that Titus was actually ordained and fixed by the apostle in that office, by whatever name it be called. The first of these opinions is certainly an ill-grounded one; and the latter, most probably, a mistake also. For Titus was, in all probability, a bishop of Crete, neither in one nor the other of these senses; but was what, in fcripture, is called an " evange-" list"; an officer quite distinct from a presbyter, pastor or bishop; which were then the same !!

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Do you ask then, What is meant by an evangelist? I will answer in the words of a divine, very learned in matters relative to the apostolic times, churches and customs. " The evangelists were a fort of secondary apostles, " who received their doctrine and authority im-" mediately from the apostles of our Lord Jesus "Christ: They were not fixed bishops, or pas-" tors, of particular churches, but watered the " churches which the apostles had planted, per-" feeted what they had left deficient, planted " churches by their orders, or rectified abuses; " earried and brought back letters and meffages" [of importance], "and did all they could to supply the place of an apostle, when he was ne-" ceffarily engaged elsewhere*". The account which we have of Titus in the new testament, corresponds extremely well with this description of an eyangelist; and he was, in all probability, an officer of that superior rank, betwixt an apostle and a bishop, or presbyter. And as the apostolic office, in the highest and properest sense of it, was discontinued when the apottles personally died; fo, according to the description of an evangelist before given, the latter office must have also been discontinued with the other; i. e. in such fort, that no eyangelist, in the highest and strictest fense, could be appointed, when there was no apostle surviving to appoint him. But, this notwithstanding, there is no reason to doubt but that the bishops, pastors or presbyters, who survived the apostles, had sufficient authority, not

^{*} Dr. GEORGE BENSON, the Author's learned friend and corref-

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only to preach themselves, but to ordain others, for the defence and propagation of the golpel. And the ministers of the gospel at this day, by whatever name or title they are called, have still both these powers united in them; unless, perhaps, some of them have renounced one of them, by putting themselves into a state of servile dependence upon, and subjection to, those who have no right to "lord it over God's heritage", t or them. Be that as it may, the church of Christ, which is his body, never was, nor will be, fo forfaken of its head, as not to have within itself, as derived from him, sufficient power, sufficient authority, for appointing all officers necessary for its support; and also for " making increase of the body, by that which every joint suppliest, to the cdifying of itself in love". §

THE remaining part of the first chapter of this epistle, is taken up with the proper qualifications for an elder, or christian bishop; with hints at some vain talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision; and with remarks on the general character of the Cretians, which was probably much better known to the apostle than to Titus; and yet very needful for the latter, who was to reside among them for a time, to be well

apprifed of.

But, whether Titus were left at Crete as an evangelist, or as a presbyter of prime distinction; or even tho' it were in the capacity of a histop in the more modern and unscriptural sense; eyet it must still be remembered, that he was to be a

B 4 PREACHING

PREACHING One; not merely to ordain others to that laborious fervice, and to overfee them therein. For, in the second chapter of the epiftle, the apostle proceeds to give him some directions concerning the discharge of that duty; and the regard which he was therein to have to perfons of different ages, fexes, and stations in life; admonishing him to adapt his instructions to them respectively. Alluding to the deceivers, and vain talkers, spoken of in the former chapter, he begins the second thus: " But speak thou the "things which become found doctrine." And, what things those are, we will, if you please, leave the apostle to explain for himself; as he does in the following verfes. He immediately subjoins; "That the aged men be sober, " grave, temperate, found in faith, in charity, " in patience." These then, are some of the things which become found doctrine. What are the others? — " The aged women likewife, "that they be in behaviour as becometh holi-" ness; not false accusers*, not given to much wine, "teachers of good things." - Of what good things? - " That they may teach the young "women to be fober," as the apostle goes on; "to love their husbands, to love their " children, to be discrete, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own huf-" bands, that the " word of God be not blaf-" phemed." But how were the elder women to teach the younger fuch good things as thefe? Doubtless, by their own exemplary practice, and private

^{*} In the Original, " not Devils".

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private counsels, as opportunity presented: For the apostle allowed not women, except inspired, to teach in any other, or more public manners. Thus it is then, that the elder women were to teach the younger these excellent things; amongst which are good Oeconomy, and a prudent, difcrete and virtuous behaviour in their families; as for other reasons, so particularly, left "the " word of God should be blasphemed": i. e. lest the gospel of Christ should fall under the contempt and reproach of men, by reason of the ill conduct of women professing godlines;

whether old or young.

THE apostle goes on; "Young men likewise " exhart to be fober-minded". And he immediately labjoins [ver. 7.] " In all things shewing "the self a pattern of good works", &c. Intimating to Titus the great importance, the absolute n cellity, of taking heed to himself, as well as to as doctrine; and of being an example of that merlety, that godly and virtuous, conversation, which, by his preaching, he was to recommend to others. The apostle then considers the state and duty of servants; enjoining Titus to teach them " to be obedient, unto their own masters, " and to please them well, &c. that they might " adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all "things". And these duties of the old and young, male and female, bond and free, the apostle suggests to Titus, should be inforced upon them respectively, by motives drawn from the the nature and defign of the gospel of God's grace."

§ See 1 Cor. xiv. 34 and 1 Tim. ii 11, 12.

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grace." " For the grace of God that bringeth " falvation unto all men", fo it might, and, I think, ought to be rendered "hath appeared; " teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and " worldly lufts, we should live soberly, righte-" oully and godly in this present world; looking " for that bleffed hope, and the appearing of the " glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus "Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might " redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto "himself a peculiar people, zealous of good " works. These things speak and exhort, and re-" buke with all authority. Let no man despise

" thee." Thus ends the chapter.

AND from this curfory view of the chapter, we may form a good general idea of what the apostle intended in the beginning of it, by "found doctrine", and the "things which become it": viz. more especially the plain, obvious, and indisputable doctrines of the gospel, respecting the redemption of mankind by the Son of God, and his appearing in glory hereafter to judge the world; together with the practice of fobriety, rightcousnessand godliness; those duties, the excellency and the obligation of which, are in some measure apparent from the light of nature, tho more clearly made manifest, and more forcibly taught, in the gospel of the grace of God; in the faith of which they are to be performed. And this account of the things which become found doctrine, may receive both illustration and confirmation from the same apolitle's first epistle to Timothy, written on a fimilar occasion with this to Titus-" The law is not made for a righte-" ous man", says he, " but for the lawless and " disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, " for the unholy and prophane, for murderers of " fathers, and murderers of mothers, for man-" flayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile "themselves with mankind, for meri-stealers, for " liars, for perjured persons, and if there be *NY " OTHER THING THAT IS CONTRARY TO " SOUND DOCTRINE, according to the glori-

" ous gospel," * &c.

HERE then, you have the Apostle's idea, both of the things which become, and which are contrary to, found doctrine. But, alas! how different a conception have many persons, concerning the gospel, its great design, and the things which become found doctrine? Are there not multitudes in the countries subjected to the papal tyranhy, who think that the things which more especially become fuch doctrine, are, telling beads, going on pilgrimages, croffing themselves, kiffing and worshipping images; and other such-like foolish and abominable practices, many of which are directly contrary to found doctrine? And among the protestants, the reformed, are there not many, in whose yet-depraved, and un-reformed opinion, some of the appendages, and the circumstantials of religion at best, have usurped the highest place and estimation, as the things that more particularly become found doctrine; while the infinitely more important and indispensable duties of morality are despised, perhaps, as " weak and beggarly

beggarly elements"? Are there not many protestants, in whose yet-unreformed and depraved judgment, hardly any thing merits the honourable appellation of found doctrine, besides the subtleties and refinements of speculative men, respecting certain abstruse, and, at best, very doubtful points ?- Such as, One may fafely fay, very few people can even understand, and fewer still were, probably, ever the better for; tho' it is likely very many have been the worfe: If not the worse, merely by believing them, yet by getting their minds foured about them, and embittered against their christian brethren, who were fo unhappy, or, perhaps more properly, so happy, as not to fee with their eyes. For my own part, I cannot but think it much more fafe to form my conceptions of found doctrine, and the things which become it, by this apostolical account thereof, than by the writings of any uninspired, felf-conceited and arrogant men whatfoever: Especially men, who were hardly ever easy, but when they were either coining some new, unscriptural definitions and distinctions, in the ungolden mint of their own brain, or imperiously imposing this droffy, counterfeit coin upon their neighbours; hereticating and perfecuting, curfing and murdering all, who would not receive it as true and genuine, unless when something else proved a more efficacious restraint with them, than either the fear of God, or the love of man: endeavouring to engage heaven and earth, and, with more fuccess, probably, to move hell in their quarrel*; afferting that their spiritual coin, for which, good men! they defired only worldly honors, and perishing gold in exchange, was the true riches, and evidently bore an heavenly, divine impression: While those to whom they would put it off, purely for their eternal benefit, could, alas poor blinded men! discern upon it no image or superscription more facred and venerable, than the mere terrestrial one of the mortal coiners, the image of the earthly, not of the heavenly ADAM.-O detestable hypocrify and villary !- Such in fact were both the spirit and the practice of many of those men, who are now followed by multitudes of protestants, as the greatest luminaries of the christian church since the apostles days, and the preachers of "found doctrine", by way of distinction from others, at least as learned, and of a far more peaceable, pious and virtuous conversation; which is, indeed, paying these reputed unfound men, but a very indifferent compliment. was the standard which a road

But, to return to the apostle and his epistle, from those who were so unlike him both in doctrine and manners :- His epiftle having been written with a view to direct Titus in his behaviour as a minister of the gospel; and particularly, though not primarily, respecting that material branch of his duty as such, his doctrine, or preaching; the particular directions relative hereto, are doubtless obligatory upon the preachers of the gospel in succeeding ages; as is, at least generally, allowed. And, by the way, how-

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^{. *} Flectere si nequeo Superos, Acheronta morebo.

ever superior Titus may be supposed to have been in fome respects, to any or all of the ministers of the gospel at this day; yet the directions given him by the apostle, are given with such an air, in such a manner, as supposes him to have been only on a level with them in another, viz. as an uninspired man, who was to receive the doctrine which he preached, and the rules to be observed by him, immediately from the apostle, not from the Spirit of God, who spake in and by him. I think myself, therefore, (one of the least confiderable, indeed, of those who have the honor to sustain this sacred office) obliged to preach found doctrine, and the things which become it, according to this account and representation thereof, in all its branches: But shall now confine myfelf to that fingle point, to which my text relates; the " exhorting young men to be fober-minded".

It has been the remark of many persons, and, I suppose, not wholly without soundation, that, amongst my honoured and beloved hearers of this society, there is a pretty large proportion of "young men"; a larger proportion, perhaps, than in most of the other assemblies in the town. I can truly say, I am, as it is certainly my duty to be, tenderly concerned for their interest, reputation and honour; for their real good in this world, as well as their eternal happiness in the other. And, tho' I have not been unmindful of them in times past; yet, methinks, it will be no more than a proper piece of respect, and mark of my unseigned love and regard to them,

if I adapt and devote a number of discourses more particularly to their fervice, agreeably to the apoftolic injunction in the text. This is what is proposed; and may almighty God, by his bleffing, render these discourses as truly useful and salutary to them, as they are fincerely defigned for that end !

AFTER some remarks on the principal terms in the text, the method which, by divine permission and assistance, will be pursued, is as follows. It is intended,

FIRST, Somewhat distinctly to explain to my young brethren, the nature of that fobriety which is spoken of in the text; and to recommend it in a curfory way.

SECONDLY, To point out, particularly, some of the many fins, follies and criminal excesses, which are repugnant to it; and against which young men especially, may need to be cautioned.

THIRDLY, It is proposed, more largely and distinctly, to exhort them to this sobriety of mind. and to disswade them from the contrary. And,

FOURTHLY, To frew them the extreme folly and danger of delaying to be fober-minded, till they are farther advanced in years; the common, and often fatal error of the young.

LET me make fome remarks on the principal terms of the text, before I proceed to the main design, as represented above.

I. THE

1. THE persons who are to be thus exhorted, are " young men." It may not be amiss just to observe here, that what is translated young men, in1 two words is only one in the original: the "young", or "younger", in the plural number, with a mafculine termination to denote the fex intended; there being nothing besides this termination, to warrant the addition of the word " men," as in our common translation: with which, however, I would not be thought to find any fault on this account. For the original word is in general well enough rendered thus. Under this term, or these terms, [young men] may be comprehended all persons of that sex, between children, and those whom we commonly call middle-aged persons.

HUMAN life, or the age of man, has been variously divided. One, and, I believe, a pretty ancient method of dividing it, is into four periods; viz. childhood and youth, complete, perfect manhood, and old age. Those who divide it thus, reckon the state of childhood, from the birth to fourteen years; of youth, from fourteen to about twenty five; of complete, perfect manhood, from twenty five to fifty; and of old age, from thence-forward till death; whether that come at the end of three-score years and ten, or, by reason of strength, not 'till fourscore years; or tho' people should live still longer " in labor and forrow."

ACCORDING to this division of human life. you perceive that all betwixt fourteen and twenty five years, are to be reckoned in the class of young men. And as to those who either a little fall short of, or exceed these years; they may yet well enough be comprehended in the text, under the denomination of young men. Neither the holy scriptures, nor moral discourses in general, aim at precision in such matters as these. It would, indeed, be no better than trisling to insist, in discourses of this kind, upon the punctilio

of a few weeks, months, or even years.

IT may be farther remarked here, that when, in common discourse, we speak of young men, we often mean those that are in a single state, or the unmarried, in contradistinction from the married, tho' SOME of the former are OLDER than many of the latter. But the apostle does not appear to speak of young men in this restrained sense, exclusively of the married; but rather to include both; tho' he might probably have a more particular view to the former. That he does not speak of the unmarried by way of diftinction from the married, is at least probable from what he had just before said concerning the young women, as he calls them; [ver. 4.] some of whom he, nevertheless, supposes to be married, to have husbands, and children: "That they may "teach the young women to—love their husbands, "to love their children, &c." From hence it may be naturally inferred, that the apostle, in the next verse but one, speaking of young men, did not intend to be understood of the unmarried only: Especially if it be considered that some of these, who have never entered into that state of life, which he fays " is honorable in all," instead of

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being young, are indeed oLD: At least this is the case among us at this day—However, as was intimated before, the apostle may naturally be supposed to have had the unmarried more especially in his eye; as being, perhaps, at once the greater number, and standing in some peculiar need of such an exhortation to sobriety—

IT is accordingly defigned to accommodate my discourses upon this subject, more particularly to those whom we commonly mean by young men, or the unmarried. But this, it is hoped, will not prevent others, the married, and even the aged of both sexes, from reaping some benefit from them. For, as sobriety, virtue, or true religion, is one uniform thing, in which all persons, of whatever age, sex, or condition, are concerned; so whatever is said upon this universally-interesting subject, if said with tolerable propriety, may be in some measure for the edification of all in general, tho' it be most particularly adapted and directed to "young men." But,

2. It will be proper to give you here, a brief explanation of the term "fober-minded"; and, hereby, fome general idea what that is, to which the apostle would have young men exhorted.

THE original word and its derivatives are used, sometimes in a more narrow or restrained, and sometimes in a more extensive, comprehensive sense. When used in the former, they may signify, and are translated, grave, chaste, temperate; in opposition to lightness, leudness, and an immoderate indulgence of the sensual appetites. They are used in such a restrained sense, even in

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several places of this same chapter; of which it is unnecessary to give particular instances. And in the like restrained sense the English word

"fober," is often used.

But the original may well bear a much more comprehensive meaning. It may signify, to be of a "found mind" in general; to have an enlightened, a well-informed and healthy mind; a mind rightly disposed; a proper temper, a duly regulated will and affections, accompanied by a corresponding external behaviour: In opposition to an erroneous, ignorant mind; a blind and depraved, a carnal or fleshly mind; a mind set upon folly and vanity; a diforderly, unruly will and affections; and those evil practices, which are the natural fruit and consequence of having a mind thus darkned and corrupted. The original word will very eafily and naturally bear fuch an extensive fignification as this. † And there is the more reason for understanding it thus in the text, because the apostle, directing Titus as to his ministerial application to young men, sums all up in this fingle word, that he should exhort them to be "fober-minded:" Whereas he branches out into several particulars, in what he says with reference to aged men, aged women, and young women, in the preceeding context; and to fervants, in the verses following. From hence it appears pretty evident, that this fingle word was designed to comprehend a great deal in it; in short, every thing, in effect, to which young

[†] SOPHRONEIN, fobrius esse, sapere, vel sana mente esse præditus. Sophronismos, sanitas animi, sapientia. Vid. 2 Tim .I. 7.--" a sound mind."

men need to be exhorted. I therefore underftand it much in the same latitude and extent, that Solomon commonly uses the word wisdom, in his writings, viz. as comprehending true religion in general, both in principle and practice; allowing only for the difference of times and circumstances, or of the dispensations which Solomon and we are under:—He under the Mosaic, and we, the Christian.

3. THE next thing, and all that is farther necellary to be confidered, for the explanation of the text, is the manner of address which the apostle enjoins Titus to use, expressed by the word "exhortation."—Young men likewise "exhort,"

&c. And, what this implies and supposes in it, may appear from the following observations.

(1.) Exhortation differs widely, in the nature and idea of it, from commanding, imperiously injoining a thing upon another, or authoritatively requiring it, as a master may command, injoin, or require any thing of, his servants. The ministers of the gospel have no such authority as this over old or young. Even the inspired apostles claimed no such power; declaring that they had no dominion over the faith of others: And they particularly admonish other ministers, not to behave themselves as "lords over God's heritage."

(2.) MINISTERIAL exhortation differs, on the other hand, from merely requesting something of another, or expressing a simple desire of it. One person may, in numberless instances, express a desire that another would do this or that,

and yet not exhort him to it. For example, if a poor man should make known his wants to his neighbour, and ask an alms of him, no one would call this "exhorting" him to be charitable,

or merciful.

(3.) CHRISTIAN and ministerial exhortation implies in it, reasoning, urging, and endeavouring to perswade, by the use of such arguments as are adapted to touch the conscience, to move the will, and to excite people to the performance of what is considered as their duty, or that which they ought to do; pressing it upon them with earnestness, and a proper pathos, as being of great importance. So that the manner of address expressed by the word exhortation, is a medium betwixt commanding and simply desiring a thing; the former of which supposeth such an authority as no minister of the gospel has, and the latter of which implies nothing more than what a child might do as well as an apostle.

(4.) The use of exhortation, as now explained, supposes men, even the young, to be reasonable creatures; capable of understanding what is said to them; of seeing the force, and feeling the weight, of rational arguments; and so, of being influenced by them. No man, in the due exercise of his own reason, employs it in giving exhortations to irrational creatures; to such as are, in their own nature, incapable of being wrought upon, or moved by such means; on a stock or a stone, on the horse or mule, which have no understanding. The end of exhortation is to move, to incline the will, by offering pro-

per, intelligible motives and arguments to the understanding, or conscience; as was said before.

be fober-minded, supposes that they need it, by reason of some natural or adventitious aversion, or disinclination thereto: At least it supposes, that they need further information; and to have metives, or arguments set before them in a stronger light; so as to touch their hearts, and give a proper turn to their will and affections. For there would be no room, at least no occasion, for exhortation, if their minds were supposed to be already properly informed, and their wills, hearts, and affections under due regulation; such

as they ought to be under.

(6.) Such exhortation does not, however, suppose that the great end or design of it is to be answered, merely by its own power, force, or energy, independently of the bleffing and grace of God concurring. What it really supposes, as was faid before, is, a reasonable creature, or a proper subject, a free, moral agent, one naturally capable of understanding, and being influenced by rational motives; and, at the same time, one that needs instruction and excitement, in respect of some natural or adventitious darkness of mind, or irregularity of the will and affections. whether the best-adapted exhortations that man can give, shall be effectual in the event, to answer the proposed end, depends upon God. For it is not without his gracious influence, that thefe arguments will actually fo touch the heart, as to produce their designed effect; however rational or scriptural fcriptural they may be. There is really no true fobriety, no good fruit, no increase, no spiritual harvest, besides that which God giveth, even tho a Paul planteth, and an Apollos watereth: As, indeed, there is not any fruit, any harvest produced even in the natural world, without his secret energy and blessing, however diligent or

skilful the husbandman may be.

(7.) CHRISTIAN and ministerial exhortation implies in it, a kind, friendly and courteous manner of address, in opposition to a rough, haughty and imperious one. The apostle' well knew, that it was by gentle and paternal treatment, rather than by harshness, rigor and feverity, that young men are, by the bleffing of God, to be made fober-minded, virtuous and good. He therefore directs Titus to "exhort" them to be fo. The same apostle in his first. epiftle to Timothy, written with the like general design with this to Titus, particularly enjoins upon him a respectful, courteous and obliging manner of treating all, both the old and young of both fexes. "Rebuke not an elder," fays he, (by an elder, here, doubtless meaning an old man only, not a pastor or bishop) "but entreat "him as a father; and the younger men as "BRETHREN; the elder women as mothers, " the younger as fifters, with all purity." And in his fecond epiftle to the same person, he gives him the following caution against a rough and arrogant behavior in his ministerial capacity. "The " servant of the Lord must not strive," says he, " but be gentle unto ALL men, apt to teach, pa"tient, in meekness instructing those that oppose "themselves; if God peradventure will give them "repentance to the acknowledging the truth." The same great apostle appeals to the Thessalonians as witnesses of the kind and paternal manner, in which he conducted himself towards them, when he preached the gospel among them: "Ye "know," says he, "how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one one of you, as "A FATHER DOTH HIS CHILDREN, that ye "would walk worthy of God, who hath called

" you unto his kingdom and glory." ‡

THESE passages may help to informs us, what fort or manner of address the apostle intended, by the word "exhortation;"-how great a regard he had for decorum, meekness and decency, in the ministers of the gospel; and how tenderly, kindly and courteously he would have even "young men" treated by them. If these rules have not been duly observed by all ministers fince; if ill-natur'd reproaches, revilings, angry invectives, and harsh, imperious menaces, have been fometimes heard, instead of the kind voice of exhortation and gentle perswasion, in the spirit of meekness and charity; it is not because the ministers of the gospel are not sufficiently warned against such a prostitution of their sacred office and character, in the holy scriptures. religion is a reasonable service. It requires in the very nature of it, an enlightened mind, a convinced judgment, the confent, approbation and love of the heart; as being in itself most amiable,

the foundation of all true happiness here and hereafter. And, furely, this conviction of its excellency, this complacency in, and love to it, are not to be produced, either in the old or young, by reproaches, invectives, or an imperious address, in the teachers of religion. In this refpect, very particularly, the apostolic maxim will ever hold true; that " the wrath of man worketh " not the righteousness of God." And these rules of charity and decorum, my beloved young brethren, shall stand as a perpetual reproach to my felf, if I deviate from them, by railing at, reviling, or lording it over you, instead of "exhorting you to be fober-minded." But,

(8.) It would be a wrong inference from what has been faid respecting this point, that these ministerial exhortations may therefore be innocently difregarded: Or, that those to whom they are given, are at liberty either to receive or reject them, without any danger of incurring the displeafure of God. Exhortations that are founded in truth and reason, and are according to the word and will of God, by whomsoever given, cannot be despised, or set at nought, without guilt and peril. The ministers of the gospel are indispensably obliged to take heed, what they deliver as his word and will; what they exhort you to; not "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." And if they do the latter, either knowingly and wilfully, or thro' a criminal neglect to inform themselves what they ought to preach, great is their guilt, and great the condemnation which belongs to them. Neither, on this supposition,

are you obliged to believe them, or to regard their exhortations; nay, you are bound in reason, duty and conscience to reject them. But, on the other hand, if they deliver to you real and important truth; if they exhort you to what is according to the word and will of God; certainly fuch exhortations as these are, in their own nature, binding. I mean, they are obligatory upon your confciences: You cannot difregard them, without acting contrary to reason, without sinning against God, and exposing yourselves, hereby, to his righteous displeasure. What tho' the ministers of the gospel are not your masters, or lords? What tho' they have no authority to command you how you shall conduct yourselves? What tho' they have no right to call you to an account, for contemning and difregarding their exhortations? or to harm you in any respect whatsoever, as certainly they have not. Yet are you not accountable to God? Are you not accountable to yourselves? Are you at liberty to act unreasonably? Have you a right to reject the truth? the commandments of God? Are you without law to him? Have you, in short, a right to reject any exhortations that are given you agreeable to his word and will, by those who, in his providence, sustain the character and relation of teachers and instructors to you? or even by any other person? You cannot think you have any fuch right as this, to do wrong; or that you may "use liberty for a cloak of maliciousness."

In many cases, counsels and exhortations are refuseable; or they may be rejected without guilt or danger. But this is only when they are in their nature bad, or indifferent, doubtful, or merely prudential. No exhortations of this nature, are binding upon the conscience; but the persons to whom they are given, are at liberty to reject them, if they chuse to do so; yea, they are in reason and conscience bound to do it, as to those counfels that are positively bad; as was observed before. But when you are exhorted to be foberminded; when you are counselled to receive and embrace the truth, sufficiently proved to be such; when you are perswaded to do what is in its nature fit and reasonable to be done; when you are admonished to fear God, and keep his commandments; in a word, when you are exhorted to do your duty, and what God himself requires of you; certainly these are counsels and exhortations of fuch a kind, that they cannot be difregarded without great guilt and danger. They do not come under the head of indifferent, doubtful, or merely prudential counfels; much less, under that of bad ones: But they are fuch as ought to have all the weight and influence of commands; even the commands of God himself. Such, indeed, they are, in one fense: For God authoritatively requires of you, whatfoever you are exhorted to, conformably to reason, his word and will, whoever the exhorters themselves may be; and altho' they have no dominion over you, nor any right to exact an account of your behaviour, except in the way of fober remonstrance, expostulation, and friendly reproof, if there should be occasion for it.

If the young men of Crete had not " fuffered the word of exhortation" from Titus, but scorned and rejected it; would they not have been justly blameable? Without doubt. If you should do the like, what would be the consequence? You need not be told? The obligation to regard and follow exhortations, depends much less upon the character, office, or qualifications of him that gives them, than it does upon the nature of the exhortations themselves. Tho', as to the former, there is no evidence, nor even probability, that Titus was an inspired preacher. He received his doctrine and directions from the apostle. If others therefore, tho' the meanest of Christ's ministers, follow the doctrine and directions of the same apostle, of all the apostles, and even of Christ himself; will not their exhortations be as binding upon you, as those of Titus were upon the Cretian youth ?—" Judge even of yourselves " what is right."

(9.) ALTHO' the term exhortation implies in it a friendly and courteous manner of address; yet, certainly, it is not designed in opposition to reproving and rebuking those that do evil, when there is just occasion for it. For, in the same chapter, the apostle enjoins Titus to do thus: "These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with "all authority; let no man despise thee." Where you will observe, that exhorting and rebuking are joined together; so that the former could not be intended in the text, in opposition to the latter. And in the preceeding chapter, speaking of the gross immoralities of the Cretians, as even one of their own poets had characterized them,

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he immediately subjoins, "This witness is true; wherefore rebuke them sharply, &c." † In his epistle to Timothy, he also says, "Them that sin, "rebuke before all, that others also may sear." § Or, as it might, and, I suppose, ought to be translated: "Them that sin before all, rebuke," &c. For, surely, they were not to be rebuked before all, or in a public, solemn manner, unless they had sinned before all, or their crimes were notorious and public; as the common reading implies.

But it is farther to be observed here, that even reproof and rebuke, which are needful in fome cases, and which may feem to imply somewhat of rigor and severity in their nature; may yet be administred in a truly friendly and paternal manner. And they doubtless ought to be given in fuch a way, if possible, as to convince those to whom they are given, that they are kindly intended for their amendment, and real good; fince, otherwise, there is little or no benefit to be hoped from them. Yea, they are more likely to have a bad, than a good effect, if they are feen to proceed from pride, resentment and anger, or are attended with infulting and reviling expressions. that the apostle did not design such rebukes as these, but quite contrary ones, in the spirit of charity and meekness, is sufficiently evident from his own words, in his fecond epistle to Timothy; where he joins reproving, rebuking and exhorting, together; faying, "Reprove, rebuke, exhort " with all long-suffering and doctrine;" and this, even where he is speaking professedly of those, who " would not endure found doctrine." ‡

(10.) AND Chap. I, 12, 13. § 1 Tim. V. 20. ‡ Chap. IV. 2, 3.

, (10.) AND lastly, It cannot reasonably be thought inconsistent with the kindness, meekness and gentleness of the gospel, or of that manner of address which is implied in the word exhortation, to lay open the folly and danger of vice, or of difregarding the word and commandments of God, in the plainest, fullest and most forceable manner possible: To shew to all people, whether old or young, the guilt and mifery of a state of alienation from God, and of enmity to him in their minds by wicked works; together with the imminent hazzard which wicked men are in, of perishing in their sins; and "warning them to flee from the wrath to come." It is not here meant, that this may be done by prejudging, or pointing out particular persons, as the heirs of wrath and perdition; which were indeed an abominable piece of arrogance and prefumption; but, by shewing in a clear and forceable manner, that the paths of vice and folly, by whomfoever trodden, are the paths that lead to destruction.

THERE are some persons, who profess to have a relish for discourses upon the excellency and rewards of moral virtue, with exhortations to the practice of it; and yet do not well like to have the evil and danger of sin insisted on; or the terrors of the Lord set before them. This is what some people consider as savouring of harshness, sourness and severity; hardly consistent with the meekness and charity which become the ministers of the gospel. Nor, indeed, will I deny, that these topics may be treated upon, not only in a manner that is very justly disgustful, but too fre-

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quently; or to the neglect of others which are equally proper and useful; and are, at the same time, more pleasing; yea, probably, better adapted to produce a good effect upon the minds of many persons. And, to say the least, I do not envy those men their particular temper, and cast of mind, who seem to be hardly ever so much in their element, as when they are thundering "hell and damnation" in the ears of people, with all the most frightful images and expressions and expressions are the same as the same

fions, which they can collect together.

BUT still, these less agreeable topics of perswasion, are in themselves very proper and necesfary: And the infifting on them at times, in a scriptural way, ought not to be imputed to fournefs, gloominefs or moroseness of temper; or to any want of charity and good-will. Is the physician thought to be wanting in kindness, good-will or respect to his patient, for letting him know, in fome cases, the nature and danger of his disease? Especially if, at the same time, he informs him of the remedy; exhorts him to use it, and to take all possible care and pains, that he may recover his health, and live happily. The disease would be the same in itself, tho' the patient were not thus informed concerning it; and the real danger, very often the greater, for a reason too obvious to need mentioning. Is the pilot who, at a distance, observes a vessel in a storm, just running upon rocks or quickfands, and likely to be foundered in a few minutes, thought to want good-will to the people on board, because he gives them the fignal of their danger, and directs them to a secure harbour! Is the watchman that cries "Fire" aloud in the night, thro' the streets of a city, to awake the fleeping inhabitants, lest they should be consumed in their beds; calling upon them to arise, and extinguish the flames, supposed for that reason, to want benevolence to them, and a proper concern for/their welfare! No one is so absurd as to reason after this rate. In these cases, neither the physician, the pilot, nor the watchman makes the danger; but only discovers it, and exhorts those whom it concerns, to escape it: Which, surely, are acts of kindness and charity; and fuch as each of them was under obligation to perform. To have done otherwise, would have been at once a neglect of

duty, and great cruelty.

WHY then should it be thought unkind, or ungenerous, in the spiritual physician under Christ the Chief, to shew to youth, or others, their spiritual diseases? their danger of eternal death? Especially if, at the same time, he shews the remedy, the means of obtaining eternal life, and exhorts to the use thereof. Why should it be thought an unkindness for the spiritual pilot, to warn those of their danger, whom he sees carried down the gulph of error and vice with a rapid course; and ready to be swallowed up in the abyss of destruction and misery? Especially if, at the same time, he points them to the great ARK, and to a fecure haven; where neither winds, nor waves, nor florms can hurt them. Why should it be accounted a cruel thing in the spiritual watchman, to awaken those that are allecp asleep in their sins, and every moment in danger of being confumed in the fire of God's indignation?-to "cry aloud," and even to "lift " up his voice like a trumpet"; exhorting them, if I may so express it, to extinguish those terrible flames with the tears of repentance, while there is opportunity for it? Is not this the truest charity? As was faid in the other cases, he does not make, but only give warning of the danger, that it may be escaped. And has not God enjoined this upon all who are, by office, the preachers of righteousness? He says to each of them, in effect, as he did to the prophet of old: "Son " of man, I have made thee a watchman to the " house of Israel: Therefore hear the word at " MY MOUTH; and give them warning from " ME. When I say unto the wicked, Thou " shalt furely die; and thou givest him not " warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from " his wicked way to fave his life; the fame " wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his " blood will I require AT THY HAND. Yet " if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not " from his wickedness, nor from his wicked " way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou " haft delivered THY SOUL." +

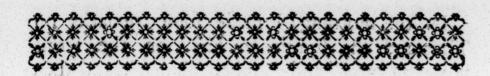
IT should also be remembered, that exhorting young men, or others, to be fober-minded, must, by natural and just implication intend, using all arguments and motives that are proper to that end. And therefore, such as the lastmentioned, must not, cannot be omitted; tho'

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⁺ Ezek. Ch. III.

there are many others to be infifted on, with the fame general view. Indeed, a minister of the gospel shews no less benevolence and tenderness to his hearers, by admonishing them of the danger of infidelity and impenitence, provided it is done in a rational and scriptural way; than by exhorting them to be fober-minded, wife and virtuous, from a consideration of the present peace, and future rewards of religion: Such confiderations as those which now close this discourse, addressed by Solomon to his own Son; and found among those excellent proverbs, the design of which was, " to give subtlety to the " fimple, to the young man knowledge and un-" derstanding".— " My fon—Happy is the man " that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth " understanding. For the merchandise of it is " better than the merchandise of silver, and the " gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou " canst desire, are not to be compared unto her. " Length of days is in her right hand: and in " her left hand riches and honour. Her ways " are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay " hold upon her; and happy is every one that " retaineth her." +

† Prov. III. 11-18.



SERMON II.

Of Sobriety in general, in Principle and Practice. More particularly, That it implies (1) A Belief of God's Being, Perfections and Providence. (2) Of the Christian Revelation. And (3) Sober Thoughts of One's self. Short Reslections on each.

TITUS II. 6.

Young Men likewise exhort to be soberminded.

Society, having a design to adapt a number of discourses particularly to your service, as a mark of the respect and good-will which I bear to you, as well as from a regard to my duty more immediately to God, whose I am, and whom I serve with my spirit, tho' in weakness: I thought I might very properly make these words of the apostle Paul to Titus, the subject of my intended discourses.

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In the morning I made some remarks on Titus and the Epistle to him; on the terms "young men", and "fober-minded"; and then considered, more particularly, what that manner of address implies in it, which is expressed in the text by the word "exhertation". These several observations were designed only as introductory to my main design; which was exhibited in the preceeding discourse, under sour general heads. The first of these, to which I shall now proceed without farther presace, was,

FIRST, By divine affishance, somewhat distinctly to explain to you the nature of that so-briety, which is spoken of in the text; and

to recommend it to you in a curfory way.

But, let me here just remind you of something observed in the preceeding discourse; that the original Greek word, tho' perhaps most commonly used in a restrained sense, to signify being grave, chaste, temperate or moderate, yet easily and naturally admits a very extensive meaning. It may comprehend all that is commonly intended in the writings of Solomon, by "wisdom"; i. e. true religion in general, both in principle and practice. And there is, if I mistake not, a particular positive reason for understanding it in such a latitude in the text. In this comprehensive sense, it will accordingly be considered in the ensuing discourses.

For the farther illustration hereof, it may be observed that this expression, "sober-minded," naturally suggests to us, that true sobriety, or all true wisdom, begins, and has its scat in the mind.

mind, foul or spirit; the intellectual, immortal, and most excellent part of our compound nature: That it confifts in the foul's, or mind's being rightly informed, disposed, and under due regulation. If the mind be not duly enlightened, rightly affected, and under a proper influence, no person, whether old or young, can be truly wife, virtuous or fober. Not the body, but the mind itself, is most properly the residence, or seat, of true wisdom and sobriety; of all morally good qualities. However inoffensive, blameless or regular a person's external behaviour in life may be; yet if you suppose him at the same time to have a mind destitute of knowledge, uninformed with truth, void of fincerity and good principle; or, in one word, if you suppose him deftitute of a " fober mind," in the strict, literal -fense of these words, you certainly suppose him to be neither wife nor good, in a moral fense. You suppose, indeed, some appearance of wisdom, of fobriety, or of virtue; but it is only the appearance, not the reality; the shadow without the substance. Or, if I may be indulged the expression, you suppose a fair, magnisseent temple, but no Deity, no God within. Nay, farther: If you suppose the foul, or mind of man, una lorned with knowledge, virtue, and good principle; do you not, of consequence, suppose it to be deformed and debased by error, ignorance, vice, or positively bad principles? Doubtless you do. The mind of an infant has, indeed, been confidered by some, as a charte blanche, orclean paper, fit to receive any infeription, impression or character: character; and tho' not endowed with any knowledge or virtue, still not positively erroneous, vitiated, or morally corrupted: With the truth and justness of which supposition, I am not now concerned. But you cannot even suppose a person that is come to years, so as to be a moral agent, in fuch a middle state as this, betwixt knowledge and error, good and evil dispositions. If such a person, tho' but a young man, is destitute of wisdom, virtue, and a right turn of mind, he is certainly and positively erroneous, foolish, vicious, or wrongly disposed. Whatever may be imagined respecting the soul of an infant; yet the foul of fuch a moral agent, cannot be conceived destitute of all thought and sentiment, of all opinion and principles; and if it is not under the influence of fuch as are true and right, virtuous and good; it must of course be defiled, corrupted and depraved by fuch as are erroneous and vicious; as was faid before. So that tho' I just now compared a person, who is apparently sober or virtuous, but without fincerity, without good principle, to a beautiful temple in which no Deity resides; it now seems that such a one may, with far more propriety, be likened to a "whited " fepulchre, which indeed appears beautiful out-" ward, but is within full of dead mens bones,

Now, if the very "mind and conscience are thus defiled", thus under the influence of error, of wrong dispositions and affections; surely you cannot think such a person "fober-mined",

" and of all uncleanness". †

whatever his external appearance may be. Let me just add here, that tho', in many characters, there is such a strange mixture of wisdom and folly, virtue and vice, fincerity and hypocrify, that it is next to impossible for any mortal to determine, whether the good or the bad qualities predominate, fo as to constitute the general character; yet doubtless, either the former or the latter actually do so in every man. For otherwife, there would be a moral agent without any moral character! — unless this can be justly accounted one - That he is neither wife nor foolish, virtuous nor vicious, good nor bad, but fomething, no one can tell what, between both: Which, to be fure, will not be easily admitted even as a supposcable case or fact, by those that have given their attention to the important subject of morals and religion.

But tho' it is suggested by the very expression in the text, that the mind itself is the seat of virtue, wisdom or sobriety, as was said before; yet you are not to imagine that when you are exhorted to be sober-minded, this exhortation respects your minds, or inner man only; or, that it has no reference to your outward behaviour. There is an external sobriety of the manners, as well as an internal one of the mind; tho' the latter is, indeed, the first to be considered and regarded. But the mind being set right, or duly informed and disposed; your outward actions and conversation are also to be under a proper regulation; such as corresponds to a sober mind. Yea, farther, if your minds are endowed with

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true wisdom or sobriety, your outward conduct will, without doubt, be fober and regular also. These things cannot well be separated even in imagination. The former of them infers the latter; though the latter of them does not, at least not so necessarily, infer the former. For we may much more easily conceive of a person's having the external appearance of virtue and fobriety in his behaviour, without the reality of it in his mind, than we can, on the other hand, conceive of his being really wife, or fober-minded, and yet commonly acting foolishly and viciously. The former is not an impossibility; but the latter is so, There being, therefore, fuch a even in nature. close and manifest connection betwixt sobricty of mind, and of conversation, both which are neceffary to conflitute a truly good character; the exhortation which we are confidering, must be fupposed to respect and comprehend both; the former of them, indeed, primarily, and most directly, and the latter of them indirectly, or confequentially; but yet no less truly and certainly than it does the other, the fobricty of the mind.

It should be further observed, that there are not, properly speaking, two or more different kinds of true sobriety, wisdom or religion; one for the old, another for the middle-aged, and a third for the young; or one for male, and another for female: But there is one kind of religion, wisdom or sobriety for all; even as there is but one God, one Lord, one faith, one hope of our calling; one general rule, or manner of conversation, prescribed for all. There are, indeed,

deed, some peculiar obligations and duties refulting from our respective relations and circumstances in life. There are certain things incumbent upon the aged, which are not fo, upon the young; at least not in the same degree: As, on the other hand, there are some, to which youth are more especially obliged; and some follies, indiscretions and vices, which they need more particularly to be warned against. But these are no more than circumstantial differences. True sobriety, wisdom or religion, is still essentially one and the same thing, not only in old and young, but in male and female, bond and free; the particular duties which are proper and peculiar to these states or conditions respectively, making no effential difference. As a man in health may in reason be bound to do some things which 'a fick one is not, and vice versa; or as a man in civil office and authority may be bound to do fome things which a man in a private capacity is not obliged to do, yea, cannot do lawfully or innocently; and yet a truly wife and fober man is of the same religion both in health and sickness, and whether he fustains a public, or only a private character: So the old and the young, male and female, the great and small, all persons in general, are under obligation to be of the same religion, effentially confidered, notwithstanding some differences in their respective duties, arising out of their particular relations and circumstances in life. And the same spirit of truth, of virtue and wisdom, actually resides, operates in, and actuates them all, if they are truly fober-minded. Now,

Now, that sobriety of mind to which young men are to be exhorted, is unquestionably a religious sobriety; founded in a due regard to almighty God; conformable to the dictates of right reason, and such as all persons in general, of whatever age or condition, are under obligation to; and including, moreover, whatever particular duties are, either exclusively, or more efpecially, incumbent upon the young. It cannot, furely, be supposed that the apostle, in the text, intended any thing short of a truly religious, pious, or godly fobriety of mind; as was just now intimated. And there is the more reason for particularly observing this to you; because there is something that often passes in the world under the name of fobriety, which, tho' really implied and comprehended therein, and therefore good and commendable in its place, does yet by no means come up to the full and proper idea hereof; but is effentially defective, being without any piety at bottom.

This matter deserves to be more particularly stated and explained. We sometimes speak of sobriety particularly in opposition to intemperance in eating and drinking; and when we mention any one as a sober man, we mean, perhaps, no more than that he is free from these gross and shameful vices. Sometimes by a sober man, we mean only one that is not addicted to leud, lascivious practices. Sometimes by a sober man, we mean no more than one who is externally grave and solid, in contradistinction from a light, airy and fantastic one. Sometimes we use the

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fame word in a little larger fense; meaning perhaps, by a fober man, one that is of a grave and serious deportment in general; free from all the gross vices of intemperance, and debauchery, of rioting and lasciviousness; and one that steadily minds his proper worldly business, being, in that respect, a good member of society. Now, altho' these things are all really commendable in their places, and, without doubt, included in that fobriety of mind which is intended in the text; yet they are an extremely imperfect and deficient notion of it. This appears, indeed, in some measure, from what has been already said, respecting the necessity of internal sobriety; which is not necessarily implied in such an externally grave and fober conversation. But what I still more particularly intend here, is, that this idea of fobriety is very defective and imperfect, inafmuch as it does not necessarily suppose a due regard to God, or any truly religious principle, as the spring and source of it.

An Atheist, or the fool who saith in his heart, There is no God, may possibly be a sober man in this low and partial fenfe. There is such a thing as conflitutional gravity, or a natural fedateness and solidity, and fort of aversion to those gross vices in some men: Or a mere sense of decency may preserve some therefrom, while they are destitute both of the love and fear of God, or of all religious principle. A person may abstain from them, and in that partial sense be a fober man, from worldly prudence and policy only; motives, which tho' not positively evil, yet cannot be accounted good in a religious, or even moral sense: For, to be good in this sense, supposes a regard to God, and to moral obligations.

LET me add, tho' it may feem strange, perhaps, at the first thought, that it is possible this external sobriety of behaviour may, in some cases, be owing to a positively wrong and vicious principle: So that if a person were of a less degenerate and depraved mind than he is in some respects, he would of course also have less of this outward gravity and fobriety. This observation might be illustrated and confirmed by divers examples; but one may fuffice. man, then, may be worldly-minded and covetous to a prodigious degree; having all his thoughts and defires centred on earthly riches, and his mind continually employed on the methods of obtaining and keeping them; while he "fays to " the gold, Thou art my hope; and to the fine " gold, Thou art my confidence." Now this is unquestionably an irrational, vicious principle; a positively wrong and depraved turn of mind. And yet it is, in its natural confequences and operations, a check, and powerful restraint to the vices of leudness and luxury, of riot and debauch-Such a predominant, boundless love of riches, naturally and directly leads to a diligent application to worldly business; to an external gravity of deportment; and to fobriety of conversation, in that partial sense of it, spoken of above; or as it stands in opposition to the wasting, impoverishing vices of idleness, luxury, and

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an excessive indulgence of the sensual appetites. These vices are, in their very nature, incompatible with extreme avarice. Nor did the world ever yet fee a thorough MISER, that was addicted to them; seldom one, who did not loudly declaim against them as odious, scandalous and ruinous ones. Were fuch a grave, rich-poor-happy -miserable man, freer from this particular predominant vice, he might very probably have less external sobriety; and, instead of always preaching against the follies, extravagances, and criminal excesses of young men, sometimes condescend to make one of a party with them in these excesses-Mere pride, that hateful sin, may, in some cases, be supposed to produce the like external gravity and fobriety, by abforbing, as it were, all the feebler lusts and passions. In fhort, it comes to this at last, that one enormous, gigantic and voracious vice,

"Like Aaron's scrpent, swallows up the rest". *
Thus, you see, it is possible, not only for real, but great and enormous vices of the mind, to contribute to the appearance of virtue and sobriety in the external conversation; particularly in the instances which have now been mentioned. But that sobriety to which all, and young men in particular, are to be exhorted, as was said before, is primarily an internal sobriety of the mind; and not meerly so, but a truly religious sobriety, resulting from a proper regard to God, his authority and commandments. Whatever sobriety, whether of mind or manners,

or both, may be conceived of without piety, without religious principle; this is not that which is intended in the text. It is effentially defective; it does not deserve the name of sobriety in a religious sense, tho' it may be so called in a civil or political one; and tho' it may contribute to a man's reputation and interest in the world; yea, may render him a very useful and respectable member of society. Nor should we, indeed, ever indulge to groundless suspicions about the fincerity of particular persons; which were

highly injurious and criminal.

IT must be observed farther, that the sobriety to which you are exhorted, is not only in general a religious, but a truly Christian sobriety of mind and manners: Such as corresponds to the faith of the gospel, and to the commandments of God as promulgated by his Son Jesus Christ; and therefore presupposes belief in him as the light, the faviour and judge of the world. We may be very certain that the great apostle Paul, (who himself defired neither to preach nor to know any thing, in comparison of "Jesus Christ and him crucified") giving directions to Titus as a minister of the gospel, and enjoining him amongst other things, to exhort young men to fobriety, had in his mind nothing short of that fobriety which is in its nature truly christian; agreeable to the glorious discoveries, and the genius of the gospel; such an one as is regulated by its precepts, and made manifest in a conversation becoming this divine institution. It were quite unnatural to suppose that the apostle had

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had in view, only such a sobriety as a meer pagan who believes the being of a God, may possibly be the subject of: Nay, it would be so, to suppose he intended only such a sobriety as a Jew, still under the Mosaic dispensation, might posses, or practife. It cannot be reasonably imagined, that he would have had Titus exhort the young men of Crete, who were partly Gentiles, and partly Jews by birth, to be sober-minded upon the principles of the gentile theology, which were so vain and absurd; and which he himself every where decried: Nor yet only upon the true principles of natural religion; which discovers not any way wherein finful creatures may certainly obtain eternal life: Nor yet, laftly, upon the footing of the Mosaic law, which was "weak thro' the flesh"; and of which the same apostle himself says, that as many as are of the works of it, " are under a curse." If we confider the character of the writer, and of the person to whom he wrote, together with the time, occasion and circumstances hereof, we cannot doubt but that St. Paul's meaning was, that Titus should exhort the Cretian young men to receive the revelation of the grace of God by his Son from heaven, upon its proper evidences; and to live in a practical conformity tothe holy precepts of the gospel.

THAT he intended nothing below, or short of, fuch a truly christian sobriety of mind, is farther evident from hence. The feveral exhortations which Titus is enjoined to give to the old and young, &c. respectively, are introduced thus,

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with particular reference to some persons, " whose mouths were to be stoped, -especially those of the circumcifion"; - " But speak " thou," fays the apostle, "the things which be-" come sound DOCTRINE: That the aged " men," &c. And one reason particularly assigned, why Titus should teach, and exhort to, these things, and others practife them, is, " that the WORD OF GOD be not blasphemed." Now, certainly, what the apostle intended by the word of God, and found doctrine, is neither more nor less than the gospel of God. This, if proof were needed, would be manifest from a parallel passage in his first epistle to Timothy-" And if there be any other thing that is con-" trary to SOUND DOCTRINE, according to the " glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was " committed to my trust". This gospel of the kingdom then, is the found doctrine intended, and that word of God, which should not be blafphemed. Who then can doubt, but that the sobriety of mind spoken of by the apostle, is the same thing in effect, with the belief and practice of the christian religion? Or, if any like this expression better,—a practical faith in the gospel; tho', for my own part, I know of no real difference in the sense of them.

THE same thing is farther manifest, beyond all doubt, from the words of the apostle a few verses after the text: Where he fuggests some other motives to, or reasons for, the observation of the several exhortations before-mentioned: - "That they

general

" may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in " all things. For the grace of God-hath ap-"peared—teaching us, that denying ungodliness " and worldly lufts, we should live soberly-" looking for that bleffed hope, and—our Saviour " Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that "he might redeem us," &c. The text being confidered thus in connexion with what preceeds and follows it; the fobricty intended therein, is evidently such a sobriety of mind, not as Socrates or Plato, not as Cicero or Seneca taught, tho' in some respects truly excellent; nor yet merely such as Moses and the prophets taught; much less still, fuch as Lord Shaftsbury and Lord Bollingbroke taught: But fuch as the LORD FROM HEAVEN. and his inspired apostles taught; and such as all are to practife, who hope to afcend thither where he is, to behold, and to partake of his glory. And whosoever pretends to exhort any, whether old or young, to be fober-minded, without keeping in view, and proceeding upon, this truly divine plan-the doctrine of our redemption from fin and death by Jesus Christ, and of life and immortality bro't to light thro' the gospel, at best does his work to the halves; and, by no means, frames his exhortation according to the manifest defign, and true spirit of the text.

Thus, my young brethren, I have given you some general and imperfect idea of the sobriety to which you are exhorted: Nothing beyond this was intended by the foregoing remarks relative hereto. Let me now descend to a more distinct explanation of it, in conformity to this

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general idea, and to these cursory observations, which I shall still keep in view; and if you should do the same, it might not be unuseful to

you. In the first place, then,

I. This fobriety of mind is founded in a firm belief of God's being and perfections, his moral government and universal providence, agreeably to the light of nature, or natural reason, and to the express doctrine of holy scripture; for these do not contradict, but mutually confirm and illustrate each other. One of the facred writers uses a very bold, and equally noble figure, in speaking of the clear evidence which God, who is invisible, hath given of his existence and perfections, tomankind in general, by the visible effects of his power. "That which may be known "of God," faith he, "is manifest in [or to] them" [the gentile nations;] " for God hath shewn it "unto them. For the INVISIBLE THINGS " OF HIM from the creation of the world are " CLEARLY SEEN, being understood by the "things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." † Altho' the world by wisdom knew not God; i. e. tho' mankind in general did not actually attain to any tolerable knowledge of the true God by natural reason and philosophy; yet it is certain, even upon principles of reason, both that there is One, and but One God; an all-perfect being: One, and but One, who is underived, unbegotton, proceeding from none, and absolutely independent: "Of whom, and thro' whom, and to whom of confequence] are all things;"—all other persons and beings,

beings, whether visible or invisible. So that no one, of whom it can be truly and properly said, that he is either made or created, begotten or produced, derived from, or dependent upon another, is himself the unmade and uncreated, the unbegotton and unproduced, the underived and independent Creator, or only living and true God: For this were a contradiction in terms.

THE divine attributes, as discovered to us by the wonderful works and word of God in conjunction, are, eternity, independence, or necessary self-existence; immensity, or omnipresence; incorporeity, or spirituality; boundless power, perfect knowledge, and unerring wisdom; perfect purity, holiness and justice, truth and faithfulness, goodness, mercy, and immutability. For in all these respects, in all truly divine perfections, God is necessarily, and therefore immutably the same, even from everlasting to everlasting, " without variableness, or shadow of "turning." And as God originally created all things; fo he continually preserves, presides over, and governs them by his providence, in the most wise, righteous, good and gracious manner: Being a lover of all virtue and goodness, and abhorring all vice and wickedness, even while he is merciful to the wicked; good and kind even to the unthankful and to the evil. It will not be amiss to observe further here, that the holy scriptures speak much oftener, and far more largely and particularly, of God's goodness and mercy, than of any of his other perfections; assuring us, that " the Lord is good to ALL, and his tender

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der mercies over ALL his works;" that "there is none good but One, that is God;" that "God is love"—goodness and love itself, perfect and universal, eternal and immutable love: And it is repeated no less than twenty-six times in one psalm, that "his mercy endureth for ever."

Now, faith in God, his perfections and providence, and particularly in his goodness and mercy, is not only an effential ingredient in, but the very foundation of, all true sobriety, or religion. For, in the language of inspiration, which is in this respect at least, the language of reason also, "with-" out faith it is impossible to please God; for he "that cometh to God, must believe that he is, " and that he is a rewarder of them that diligent-" ly feek him." † Though I cannot but observe by the way, that some modern pretended reformers of the supposed errors and heresies among us, feem rather to have aimed at establishing it as a fundamental article of faith, that God is NOT " a rewarder of them that diligently feek him;" but that men may feek him, not only earnestly and diligently, but do so all their lives, and yet not find his favor extended to them, or finally receive any reward of him-except the reward of unrighteousness in eternal torments! But if this be accounted orthodoxy, I must, for my own part, humbly confess with the apostle Paul, "that after the way which they call herefy, " fo worship I the God of my fathers; believing " all things which are written in the law and the " prophets," [and the gospel of Christ also:] "and have HOPE TOWARDS GOD:" \ Which even the best men upon earth can hardly have, upon the principles of such a spurious orthodoxy

as that just now referred to.

But to return. If, instead of believing the existence and perfections, the moral government and universal providence of the equally great and good God, you have him not in all your thoughts; if you do not duly regard him; but banish him, as it were, out of his own world, the universe which sprung from nothing at his word: If you do thus, it is impossible that you should have any true sobriety of mind, any real wisdom. For the knowledge or fear of the Lord, is even literally "the beginning of wisdom." They that know not God, know nothing as they ought to know it; nor do any thing as they ought to do it.

LET me therefore, my young brethren, take occasion here to caution you against listening with a favourable ear, to any atheistical notions; fuch as strike at the being, attributes, or moral government of God; and, thereby, at the very root of all religion and virtue. There are not wanting those in this apostate, this foolish and wicked world, who scruple not even to tell others, they are fools, by intimating that they " fay " in their hearts, There is no God;" or at least, no fuch holy, wife and righteous one as is commonly supposed; none, from whom we have any thing to fear if we do evil, or to hope if we do well. And there are fome young men, tho, I would charitably hope, not amongst you; -yea, some that are more advanced in years, who eitherfrom

from an unwillingness to part with their lusts, or, at best, from great levity of mind, and an affectation of singularity, listen with pleasure to such senseless notions, when they hear them advanced; and read the books with delight, in which some persons even of the last and present age, have shewn a strange ambition to record their own solly and impiety to the ages that are to come. Take heed, my beloved brethren, lest any of you should also be carried away with these errors of

the wicked; of fuch fools as thefe.

I HARDLY need desire you, by way of antidote against the poison, and mortal venom of fuch principles, to lift your eyes to the heavens above; to observe the stupendous magnitude, the regular motions, the beautiful order, of the numerous worlds that roll there; or to ask you, how they came there? and by whom they are preserved from age to age in this wonderful order and harmony? I scarce need, for this end, to desire you even to look down upon the earth, or to look round the world which you inhabit; in which there are actually innumerable, indefinite marks and characters of infinite power, of the most consummate wisdom and goodness. will be sufficient if you consider those microcosms, those little worlds, your own bodies; which are indeed "fearfully and wonderfully made;"-with amazing skill, an art truly admirable and aftonishing to every attentive observer. And whose hand formed and fashioned these? Certainly no human one: The art, wisdom and power of all the sons of Adam united, would not suffice for the forming a single fly, emmit or mite. Nay, all human wisdom cannot even comprehend the workmanship and art of the least insect; tho' it may see enough thereof, to be at once convinced and confounded. What then will you say of your own bodies? Whose workmanship are there?

ship are they?

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BUT if even your bodies must necessarily be the product of a wisdom, a skill, an art and power, fo much furpassing all that is human; what will you fay of your minds, your fouls, which direct and governs them? From whence come knowledge, reflexion, memory? from whence, will, choice and liberty? from whence the power of at once looking back on what is past, and forward on what is future? Are these intellectual powers and faculties of yours, eternal and necessary? No. It is but a few days since you yourselves came into existence. Were they then without any cause? No. Nothing can be so, that is not both eternal and necessary. Were they then the product of inert, unknowing, fenfeless matter? That cannot be: Knowledge, choice and power cannot, furely, be derived from that which is itself destitute of all knowledge, choice and power. From whence and from whom then, came these intellectual powers? To suppose that you need to be told, would hardly be confistent with the very supposition, that you are possessed of them. From hence appears at once, the being and the spirituality of God; and the extreme stupidity of all image-worship. For there never was a more rational, a more conclusive E 4

elusive argument than this which follows—
"For-asmuch then as WE are the OFFSPRING

" of God, we ought not to think that the

"GODHEAD is like unto gold, or filver, or

" stone graven by art, and man's device." †

MOREOVER: Do not your moral faculties, particularly your fense of right and wrong, justice and injustice, demonstrate the moral character of Him, whose offspring you are? Undoubtedly, in the clearest manner; and, confequently that, under his government, virtue shall be rewarded and vice punished. Each man's own conscience, is in a fort a divine messenger, a prophet to himself; foretelling, as one may express it, "a day wherein God will judge the "world in righteousness." O then, let not this prophet within you, preach righteousness and fobriety, or prophecy to you, in vain. If you hearken to the dictates of this prophet, one may very fafely conclude, that you will not reject the testimony of those who appeared in the world in ancient times; and particularly, not "Jesus of Nazareth, who was a phophet " mighty in deed and word, before God, and all "the people." [Luke XXIV. 19.]—But this naturally brings me to observe more distinctly, tho' in conformity to what was intimated before,

II. THAT the sobriety of mind to which you are exhorted, implies a belief of the gospel, or of the christian revelation: For it is not merely a religious, but a christian sobriety, that is intended in the text. And this certainly includes, or supposes, a belief of Christ's gospel; a due

regard

regard to him in the high relation which he bears to mankind: a ferious consideration of his person, character, doctrine, precepts; the design of his manifestation and sufferings in the flesh; his refurrection, ascension, the glory to which he is exalted; his future appearing, and the end and consequences thereof. Without the knowledge, belief, and confideration of these things, there can be no fobriety of mind, deserving the name of Christian. Let me therefore descend to a few particulars here; such as seem to me very important. In doing which, I shall be obliged to be brief, and shall of choice, as far as I think confistent with my own duty and your good, avoid every thing of controversy;

in which I do not delight. And,

1. OF the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is stiled, in scripture, " the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature."‡ He often alluded to, and fometimes spake expresly of, a " glory which he had with the FATHER before the world was." To be readmitted into which glory, he once earnestly prayed, faying,—" O Father, glorify thou me with thine own felf, with the glory which I had with thee," &c. † It is faid of the Logos, or Word, that he was " in the beginning with God," and " was God;" that " all things were made by "[or thro'] him" \—And, in divers other places, the worlds, and all things, are faid to have been created by, or thro' him. Which passages, to fay the least, do not feem easily to admit the fense put upon them by the learned Socinus and his

his followers; who understand them of the new creation, or the renovation of all things. This, I confess, appears to me to be a forced, very unnatural, and quite inadmissible interpretation of

these passages.

But, to prevent your drawing any wrong inferences, on the other hand, from these expressions; let me remind you of two or three passages of scripture, which may help to explain them. In the epistle to the Ephesians, we find this expression: "God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."* In that to the Hebrews, the following: "God-hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son-by whom also HE made the worlds." || These passages may help to explain those, in which the worlds, even all things, are spoken of as having been made, or created by, or thro' Christ the Son of God, without any particular mention of the FATHER. Moreover; to prevent any wrong inferences from its being faid by St. John, "In the beginning was the Word;" you need only to be reminded of the very first words in your bible: "In the beginning "God created the heaven and the earth." Again: To prevent any wrong inferences from Jesus Christ's being stiled God, as he is several times in scripture; it will be sufficient only to remind you of his own words on one or two occasions. When the captious Jews charged him with blasphemy, because, as they said, he, " being a man, made himself God;" his answer was, "Is it not written in your law, I said, ye " are gods? If He called them gods, on whom " the word of God came, and the scripture can-" not be broken: Say ye of him whom the FA-"THER hath fanctified, and fent into the world, "Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son " of God?" And here by the way, I cannot but observe that many, instead of being content with giving our Saviour this feriptural title, fo often taken by himself, and given him by the facred writers, "The Son of God," chuse commonly to change it into, God the Son; an exprefsion which never once occurs in the holy scriptures. With how fair, candid and pious an intention they do this, others may conjecture, but themselves doubtless know-But my business here was only to remind you of two or three passages, for explaining those in which Christ is stiled God. I have given you a very observable one already. The next shall also be the words of our Lord himself, in his prayer to the Father, a little before his death: "And this is life eternal, "that they might know THEE the only true "God, and him whom thou hast fent, Jesus " Christ." † [This is the literal translation] Another passage directly to the present purpose, shall be from the apostle Paul, who is, by some, supposed himself once or twice to have stiled Jesus Christ, God: If so, it is but candid to let him be his own interpreter-" There is none other "GOD but ONE. For tho' there be that are "called gods, whether in heaven or in earth; " (as there be gods many, and lords many) but " to us there is but one God, the FATHER, of

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" whom are all things, and we in him; and one "Lord Jesus Christ, BY whom are all things,

" and we BY him." ‡

WITH respect to the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, it must be farther observed, "That in the fulness of time God sent forth his son, made of a woman;"-that the "Word was made flesh;" that " forasmuch as the children were partakers " of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of "the same;"—that he was "found in fashion "as a man;"—and is often stiled "the son " of man," and " a man;"-" Jesus, a man ap-" proved of God;"-" the man Christ Jesus;"-" that man whom God hath ordained," &c.

IT should, moreover, be very particularly observed, that God, even the FATHER, did, in a very particular and eminent, a transcendently glorious and inexpressible manner, dwell in our Lord Jesus Christ, manifesting his glory in, by and thro' him. On which account it doubtless is, that he is fometimes called God; and that they who had feen him, are faid to have "feen the FATHER;" who yet, strictly speaking, is "the invisible GoD;" and whose "image," even "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," hypostasis, substance, or essence, Jesus Christ is said to be. As to the particular mode of the divine inhabitation in Christ, it is neither revealed, nor to be comprehended by mortal men; who cannot even comprehend the manner in which their own spirits dwell in their bodies. But I repeat it, lest I should be misunderfood, that it was "God, even the Father," according cording to scripture, that dwelt or inhabited in Jesus Christ, in this inessably glorious manner. For thus he declares of himself, and his marvellous works: " I speak not of myself; but " the FATHER that dwelleth in me, HE doeth " the works."* The like manner of expression is common with him. According to which, it was not some other divine Being, agent or person, distinct from the FATHER, that dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, as some have imagined, (not very confistently with the divine unity) but the FATHER himself. And it is no less the positive doctrine of scripture, That there is but on E GOD, the FATHER, " who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all,"-even the "GoD and FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ"; than it is, That there is but one Lord Jesus Christ, " the " Son of the FATHER in truth and love;"-" the Son of the BLESSED;"- " the Son of the HIGHEST;" and of whom an angel from heaven prophesied thus before his birth: "He " shall be great, and shall be called the Son of " the HIGHEST; and the LORD GOD shall " give unto him the throne of his father David." † But to proceed,

2. THE general and grand, both the primary and ultimate end of Christ's coming down from heaven, or of his incarnation, was, to glorify his God and Father, by doing his will. "For I " am come down from heaven," faid he, " not " to do mine own will, but the will of him that "fent me" t-" I honour my Father-I feek " not mine own glory." |-" I have not spoken

^{*}John XIV.10. + Luke I. 32. 1 John VI. 38. [Ch. VIII. 49, 50,

" of myfelf, but the Father which sent me, he " gave me a commandment, what I should say, " and what I should speak-I speak therefore, " even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." -" I have glorified thee on earth; I have " finished the work which thou gavest me to do: " And now, O Father, glorify thou me with "thine own felf, &c."* This general end of Christ's incarnation, comprehends all others. But more particularly,

3. ONE principal end of Christ's manifestation in the flesh, was, to make known the Father; the nature and truth of God, or the principles of true religion, in a more clear, full and perfect manner, than they had been made known before, by Moses or any of the ancient prophets, or even John, that burning and shining light; the greatest of all the prophets, till the Son of God himself appeared in that character from

heaven.

AT the time of our Lord's coming into the world, the Jewish revelation was very grosly corrupted; the priests having long " taught for doctrines the commandments of men;" fo that tho' they were not wholly ignorant of the true God, yet "in vain did they worship him." Among the gentile nations, there were hardly any traces of true religion to be found. Divine knowledge, the only true wisdom, was far from obtaining among the nations of the world, in proportion as the polite arts and sciences had done. In many countries, particularly Persia, Chaldea, Egypt, Greece and Italy, these arts and

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sciences had been carried to a surprising degree of perfection. The poet's numbers were harmonious, and his fong fublime. The musician almost enchanted wild beasts, and the woods which they haunted, as well as favage men. The orator thunder'd and lighten'd; and, at pleasure, either rais'd or allay'd a storm in the breasts of his auditors. The noblest piles and structures arose under the hands of the architect. The canvals was taught to glow with life, bort rowed from the painter's pencil; and brass and marble to breath under the chiffel of the statuary; While the astronomer surveyed and measured the heavens; even those heavens which declare the glory of God. But notwithstanding all these improvements, these wonderful efforts of human genius and industry, "the world by wisdom knew not God!" With respect to the knowledge of Him, and of true religion, there was in fact no material difference betwixt the most refined, and the most savage and barbarous nations under heaven. Witness the multitude of the gods and goddeffes acknowledged in them; fo great, that it were easier to call all the stars by their names, than to number fuch a promifcuous rabble—heroes, strumpets, diseases, plagues, monsters, vices, constellations, beasts, birds, and creeping things! And if fuch were the gods, judge you, what the worshippers must have been; how wife, pure and holy! + now has a min

Such,

t Upwards of thirty thousand pagan deities have been mentioned by writers. Min. Fælix alone, may fatisfy any person of a moderate curiosity, upon this subject.

Such, in brief, was the religious state of the world: fuch thick darkness covered its inhabitants, especially the heathen nations, at the time when God tho't fit, last of all, to speak unto men by his Son from heaven. He accordingly appeared, faying, " I am the light of the world; "he that followeth me, shall not walk in dark-" ness, but shall have the light of life." which words he tacitly compares himself to the fun in the heavens, that ruleth by day; enlightening, warming, and diffusing bleffings on all below: Which was indeed agreeable to one of the glorious characters, under which he had been prophesied of-" the sun of righteousness " arising with healing in his beams." No man had feen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, declared him to the world. And as none perfectly knew the Son but the Father; so neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and he to whomfoever the Son revealeth him. He came to bear witness to the truth; and did it with such clearness, and convincing evidence of his coming from God, that his few disciples might then, with great propriety say, "We know that we " are of the truth, and the whole world lieth " in wickedness. And we know that the Son " of God is come, and hath given us an under-" standing, that we might know him that is " true: and we are in HIM THAT IS TRUE, in " HIS Son Jesus Christ. THIS is the true God, " and eternal life." + 4. Esus

I John VIII. 12. † 1 John V. 19, 20. Compare John XVII. 3. Which clearly determines the fense of this text, if people will be determined solely by scripture authority.

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4. JESUS CHRIST came into the world, not merely as a light to lighten it with the knowledge of the "only true God"; but to declare his will and commandments authoritatively in " I am come", faith he, " in his name. "my Father's name", &c. He came into it as a preacher of righteousness; to inculcate obedience toGod's laws which were already known; to rescue others from the corrupt interpretations, which by time, the ignorance of the people, and more especially the wickedness of the priests, had been put upon them; whereby "the command-" ment of God was made of none effect" came to put an end to the peculiarities of the Jewish dispensation; to "gather in one the children" of God that were scattered abroad"; to form them into one spiritual body, or church, under himself as head; that there might be " one fold, and one shepherd" And he promulgated certain new laws and ordinances relative to this spiritual kingdom, for the due interior regulation of it, and for its support and enlargement, till " all nations should flow into it!'.

5. He came to give mankind the most perfect and engaging example of obedience to the will of God; of all piety and righteousness, humility and charity, temperance and patience;—a living example in frail human slesh. For tho' he were made in the "likeness of sinful slesh;" yet in him was no sin: He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. He said to his disciples upon a certain occasion, "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." The like might have been said on other

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occasions. Indeed, he admonished his disciples in a more general way, to keep his commandments, "that they might abide in his love, even," saith he, "as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." And the apostle Peter says of him, that he "left us an example,

that we should follow his steps."

6. HE came to make an atonement for the sins of the world; "to put away sins by the sacrifice of himself." This he did upon the cross, when he offered himself up to God, as a lamb without blemish and without spot. He is said to have redeemed men to God by his blood; to have died for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God. And it should be particularly observed here, that he died thus, not only for a few particular persons, as some seem to imagine, but " died for all,"-" tafted death for every man;" and " gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Agreeably whereto, the apostle John speaks of him under the following character-" Jesus Christ the " rightcous, who is the propitiation for our fins, " and not for ours only, but also for the fins of " the WHOLE WORLD". So the apostle Paul speaks of it as the substance of that ministry of reconciliation which he had received, " That "God was, in Christ, reconciling the WORLD " unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto "them". And he accordinly befeeches all, in Christ's stead, to be "reconciled unto God."

7. HE was raised from the dead, and exalted to the highest heavens; not only to "appear

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in the presence of God" as an intercessor and advocate with him for his disciples; but to be crowned with glory and honor, as being by the Father appointed heir, and Lord, and Judge of all; or as having all power given unto him in heaven and in earth.

8. HE is to be revealed from heaven at an appointed time; "the time of the restitution of "all things, spoken of by all the prophets since "the world began", in the glory of the Father, to judge the world in righteousness—Let me now close these short remarks with the words of the apostle Paul-" Then cometh the end, when he " shall have delivered up the kingdom to GoD, " even the FATHER; when he shall have put "down all rule, and all authority and power. " For he must reign till he hath put all enemies " under his feet. The last enemy that shall be " destroyed is death. For, He bath put all " things under his feet: But when he faith, all "things are put under him, it is manifest that "HE is excepted which did put all things under "him. And when all things shall be subdued " unto him, then shall the Son also himself be " subject unto HIM that put all things under " him, THAT GOD MAY BE ALL IN ALL !" + " THE feveral things thus briefly hinted at, I

confider only as some of the more obvious and important ends of Christ's mediation; some of which are spoken of, or referred to, in almost every page of the new testament, as things particularly worthy of our daily meditation. Nei-

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ther can you be sober-minded, as you ought to be, without believing, and often thinking upon these capital doctrines of the gospel. For, as has been before observed, without christian faith, there can be no such thing as christian practice or sobriety, in the old or young.

LET me, therefore, here take occasion, my beloved young brethren, to warn you against the fatal principles of our modern deifts. As Jesus Christ has his ministers to exhort you to believe his gospel, and to be sober-minded, in order to your present and eternal good; the devil has also his emissaries and apostles to disswade you from it: men who, in all countries that are blok with liberry, abuse that liberty by " speaking evil of the things which they understand not": men who both declaim and write against the gospel of their falvation; and have even the hardiness to ridicule and blaspheme what angels desire to look into, and confider at once with delight and admiration; all those of them, I mean, who "kept their first estate": For, as to the rest, they doubtless blaspheme these things also; tho' they neither disbelieve nor riducle them; but "believe and tremble."-- These men, in their talk and writings, commonly pretend great benevolence and goodwill. They will profess their forrow to see you enflaved with superstitious notions and fancies They will tell you, perhaps, about revelation. that you are debarred from the innocent pleafures of life, and held in a miserable kind of bondage, by the fabled terrors of another world. Whereas, could you cast off these childish prejudices

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judices of education, and become One of them, you would enjoy a most delightful ease and freedom of mind, from a full perswasion, either that there is no future state, or at least no hell, where frail creatures are to be tormented for a few sallies and indiscretions: And, that you may depend upon it, if you should survive the shipwrack of death, you shall go to some far happier region—some Elisian sield, where you may sport and play to eternity.

THESE men, however, generally pretend to a great regard for moral virtue; more especially, universal love to mankind: Nay, they sometimes even speak respectfully of God—And, to use the words of the apostle, "No marvel; for Satan "himself is transformed into an angel of light.

"Therefore it is no great thing if his mini"fters also be transformed as the ministers
"of righteousness; whose end shall be accord"ing to their works ‡". In a word, these are
the very men whom the apostle Peter describes,
and forewarns you to beware of, in the following words: "These are wells without water.

"clouds that are carried with a tempost, to whom "the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For "when they speak great swelling words of vanity,

"they allure through the lusts of the flesh,
"through much wantonness, those that were

"clean escaped from them who live in error:

"While they promise them liberty, they them-"selves are the servants of corruption; for of

"whom a man is overcome, of the fame is he

"brought in bondage."

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THE divine mission and authority of Jesus Christ, or, in other words, the truth of the christian religion, is established by "many infallible proofs". However enthusiasts have declaimed against reason, and rational preachers, while themselves were deplorable examples of the contrary, the religion of Christ is a most reafonable religion; the wisdom, as well as the power of God to salvation, to every one that fincerely believes it. Both its doctrines and precepts, as delivered by him and his apostles, are rational in the highest sense, however they have been perverted fince; bearing a truly divine character, to those that have eyes to see, instead of being blinded by the God of this world. Jesus Christ were fulfilled many illustrious prophecies. He wrought still more numerous and astonishing miracles, by the finger of that God who dwelt in him. He was also raised from the dead himself, after having raised others, "by the power of the Father". He was often feen and converfed with by many credible witnesses, who had well known him before. He was vifibly taken up into heaven: And, soon after, in conformity to his own promise, many miraculous powers were bestowed upon his apostles, and other disciples; particularly the gift of tongues; by means of which the gospel, under the apparent management of a few fishermen, and other poor Galileans, made a surprizing progress in opposition to the united wit, malice and power of the world, both Jewish and Gentile. And divers of Christ's and his apostle's predictions have have fince been fulfilled, and others of them

are daily fulfilling.

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THE plain consequence of these facts, is, That Jesus Christ was, indeed, the Son of God; and that the religion which bears his facred name, is the true religion, which, in all reason, you are bound to receive with the profoundest reverence and gratitude. Let me therefore just remind you further here, of the words of Peter in his own, and the name of the other apostles, upon a particular occasion. When many of our Lords disciples for sook him, in the days of his flesh, and walked no more with him, he turned and faid, in an affectionate manner, " Will ye also go away?—at once intimating his unwillingues that they should do so, and his determination to leave them to their own choice and liberty. Hereupon Peter made the following answer, in which you, my young brethren, must be left to join with him or not, as God shall give you light—" Lord, + to whom shall " we go! Thou hast the words of eternal life. "And we believe, and are fure, that thou art " that Christ, the Son of the living God.";

HAVING thus shewn that sobriety of mind supposes (1) A belief of God's being and perfections; and (2) Of the christian revelation; let

me now observe.

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III. THAT

f John vi. 68, 69

Dr. LELAND's excellent Review of the Deiftical Writers, deferves to be read by every young man who had leifure for reading.

III. THAT it also implies, thinking soberly of yourselves. This is an essential, a most important ingredient in christian sobriety; and it comprehends divers particulars, which shall be mentioned with all convenient brevity. And,

1. This implies a fense of your natural ignorance, or the native darkness of your understandings. You may conclude that I do not here intend any thing that is peculiar to you; but speak with reference to what is common to you with others. All men in general are born into the world, absolutely ignorant of every thing; they know nothing of what is passing in this world or any other. Whatever any know, it is not innate, or born with them; but ac-And so feeble are their inquired afterwards. tellectual faculties, that however ambitious they are of knowing, or being thought to know a great deal, what they can actually attain to, is comparatively but very little, even tho' they fpend much time in the pursuit of knowledge. They are as it were doomed to ignorance by the very condition of their birth, nature and life in this world, notwithstanding either their thirst after, or affectation of wisdom. This is the sentiment which is expressed by Zophar in the book of Job: "Canst thou by searching find out God? " canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfec-" tion? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou " do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? -He knoweth vain men-For vain man would " be wife, though man be born like a wild ass's " colt †". Young men especially, are generally prone

[†] Chap. xi. 7-11.

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prone to entertain too high a conceit of their knowledge, and of their capacity for knowing more: Which often makes them over-politive in their own way, and felf-fufficient. It leads them to despise the opinions and counsels of others; of their parents, and other persons, tho' older and, most probably, wifer than themselves. This is of pernicious consequence in many respects. If, therefore, you would be soberminded, think foberly of, and know yourselves: It becomes you to be modest, and self-diffident; not to lean too much to your own understandings; but, from a consciousness of your inexperience, to listen to advice, and endeavour to learn of others; tho' by no means to relign up your own understandings implicitly to the dictates of any; and, least of all, in matters of conscience and religion, which are peculiarly your own concern. Indeed, you might well suspect the probity of any man's design, whatever were his character, who should perswade you to put out, or to blind your own eyes in a thick wood; promising, that when you had done so, he would be your faithful guide out of it; - especially if you had money about you. Whoever act fuch a part as this by others in their spiritual concernments, they do not fo well deferve the name of ministers of the gospel, as that of thieves, robbers and affassines.

2. THINKING foberly of yourselves, implies a due consideration of your moral frailty and depravity: whereby, as in what was last mentioned, -your natural ignorance,-nothing is intended that

is peculiar to yourselves, but what is common to the offspring of Adam. There is a great deal of perverseness and vice, which may be considered as in some sense natural to mankind; arising from ignorance, or weakness of understanding on the one hand, and from strong passions on the other. Both these are certainly natural to mankind. And what is the natural, not to fay, unavoidable consequence of such a union, or concurrence of ignorance and passion in the same subject, but irregularity of defire, will and behaviour, in many respects. But how does the case stand in fast? Do not all go aftray, at least in some degree, from the paths of reason and virtue, very early in life? fo early, that it occasioned the Psalmist to say, not indeed without a figure, that they are "cf-" tranged from the womb; and go aftray affoon as they are born, speaking lies". This, to be fure, is not literally true; nor was it defigned to be so understood. The meaning is, that the ignorance and passions of children are such, that they speak and act unreasonably, and deviate from the rules of virtue, in a greater or less degree, almost assoon as they are capable of speaking and acting at all. And the wifer fon of David has faid, to the same purpose, that "childhood and " youth are vanity"; and that "folly is bound " up in the heart of a child". By which he doubtless means something that is in a degree vicious; not fimple, unavoidable ignorance only: For he adds, that the "rod of correction will drive it far from him;" which could not be faid with propriety, of mere natural and unavoidable ignorance.

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ignorance. It is not my defign to suggest, that either you, or any others, were really and properly vicious, finful and criminal, before you were capable in any measure of distinguishing betwixt good and evil: Much less, that you were justly liable to eternal torments, either on account of any corruption of nature which you brought into the world with you, or by reason of the imputation of Adam's fin to you. For I find nothing in the scriptures that implies either of these things; and, beyond them I do not chuse to be wife. But were you not finful creatures, in a degree, assoon as you began to act viciously? Was not that very early in life? And is not this at least, just matter of humiliation to you, and to all? If you are fober-minded; if you think foberly of yourselves, even as you ought to think, the most harmless and innocent of you will not be pure in your own eyes; but acknowledge that you are unclean; having been guilty of numberless irregular defies, and faults; of many vicious actions, from your childhood, fince you were actually capable of discerning betwixt good and evil. Sothat if God were strict to mark iniquity, even the most innocent of you could not stand in judgment. What then would be the consequence, as to the most criminal!

3.4 This leads me to observe, that thinking soberly of yourselves, implies the serious consideration of your state as you are morally polluted creatures, guilty before God, and standing in need both of jur scation, and forgiveness with God. That darkness of the human mind, that irregularity

irregularity of the will, and disorder of the affections, which may justly be termed natural, in the sense before explained, are certainly infelicities at least, from which all, for their own sakes, should defire deliverance; that instead of them, there may be knowledge in the mind, regularity in the will, and a due subordination of the passions and affections to right reason. Herein summarily confifts that moral purity which was just now hinted at; and which stands in opposition to the natural blindness and depravation of the mind. But you ought to consider yourselves, not merely as carrying about with you a mental difease, which needs a remedy; but also as culpable and criminal in the fight of God, on account of your actual deviations from the rule of your duty, so far as you have really departed from it, in thought, word or deed; and therefore, as was faid before, standing in need of forgiveness also. An holy God, tho' he may pity, and shew mercy to, yet must needs be displeased with, those who knowingly violate his commandments, or the laws of reason and virtue; as you have all doubtless done in many inflances. If God had been rigorously just, or destitute of mercy, you might have been cast off by him even in childhood, for your fins committed in that state. Your transgressions have still been growing more numerous, and, probably, more aggravated with your years: So that it is not owing to your own innocence, but to the Lord's mercy, that you are not confumed. And, in order to being fober-minded, you are to think thus foberly of yourselves and your State

state, with reference to God and his laws; for this is no more than what you ought to think, it being only truth and fact; and fuch truth, the ferious confideration of which, has alvery close connection with christian sobriety of mind:

or rather, is comprised in it.

4. This implies a serious consideration of your natural frailty, or mortality; of the many evils to which you are liable in this world; of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and the certainty of death approaching. Many people, and particularly the young, are apt to entertain fond, romantic conceits about worldly felicity, and to put far away the evil day of death, of advertity and forrow; feldom, perhaps, thinking of it at all, and when they do, generally flattering themselves that this day is at a great distance. But if ever you are truly sober-minded, you will think differently upon this subject. You will see the vanity of the world and its enjoyments; even of all that is in the world, "the " lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the " pride of life". You will often have in your thoughts, the bodily pains and diseases, the numerous crosses and disappointments, and the many other natural evils, to which mankind are subjected in the present state; agreeably to the representations of scripture, and to the experience of all ages—That the creature,-that mankind are " made subject unto vanity". You will not therefore, if you think foberly of yourselves, and the present state, depend upon any great, uninterrupted and lasting felicity in this "evil world";

or even upon living long in it. For there are hardly any more obvious truths than these: That " man that is born of a woman, is of few days and " full of trouble: He cometh forth as a flower, " and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, " and continueth not." How frequent are the examples of mortality, even in the young; in the hail and strong, who had the fairest prospect of any, of long life? How often have you yourfelves feen the words of Job verified? - That " one dieth in his full strength, being wholly at " ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow." It is not of fo great importance for you to know particularly, how mankind originally came into fuch a state as has been mentioned, as it is to know, and duly to consider, the certainty of it as a fact. It may therefore suffice here, to obferve to you in general, that the holy scriptures speak of this as having been occasioned by the fin of our first parents, or their apostacy from God - But just fentiments concerning human life, mortality and death, confidered as facts, are doubtless a very material branch of that sobriety, to which young men should be exhorted.

5. A SERIOUS consideration of the consequences of death, belongs also to this head. These consequences are most important and interesting in their nature, according to the holy scriptures; which represent this short life as a state of trial or probation, and that which follows it, as a state of recompence; which is therefore to be either a most happy or miserable one to all men respectively,

"in the body." Tho' your bodies are mortal, your fouls will furvive them: "It is appointed unto all men once to die, and after that the judgment." Now you will not, certainly, deserve the character of sober-minded, unless you often think seriously of these things;— approaching death, the immortality of your souls, the righteous judgment of God, and the unfading, eternal joys, or the unutterable woes, which will be the consequence of that decisive judgment.

THERE are many other things necessary for the illustration of christian sobriety: Of which

in the next discourse. But

I CANNOT conclude, my young brethren. without cautioning you against pride, vanity and self-sufficiency; than which there is nothing more repugnant to true sobriety. Consider yourselves at all times as the degenerate off-spring of Adam. Confider the narrowness, weakness, and great imperfection of your intellectual faculties; how naturally-dark your minds are, as you come into the world; how little you really know at present, how much you are wholly ignorant of, and will be, should you live ever so long. Confider the moral depravation of your minds; your proneness to vice; the many sins and sollies which you have been guilty of, from your early childhood; how justly you might be condemned by Him, that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; who chargeth even his angels with folly, and in whose fight the heavens are not clean. Confider the need which you have, both

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both of cleanling from the filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and of pardon, through the blood of Jesus Christ. If you entertain such sentiments as these; if you think thus soberly of yourselves, it will be a good step towards that sobriety of mind to which you are exhorted. But there will be but little ground of hope refpecting you, if you are vain and proud; if you are puffed up with an high opinion of yourselves; of your own knowledge, innocence and virtue, or your righteousness in the sight of God - In faying these things, you doubtless perceive on one hand, that I do not mean to flatter you in any evil or false way. You may be equally asfured on the other hand, that I do not mean to reproach and revile you; but only to represent the simple truth to you, that you may now acquaint yourselves with God, and be at peace; so that good may come unto you in the end.

LET me also, in conformity to what has been said before, caution you against those fond and groundless conceits about worldly happiness, particularly in the gratification of your sensual lusts and passions, which the minds of the young are so commonly filled with; while they neglect that pious and virtuous practice, in which alone true felicity is to be found. Such imaginations as those, are mere dreams, or the delusions of him that is said to be a liar and murderer from the beginning, on account of his tempting our first parents with the fair forbidden fruit; telling them that they should not surely die by eating of it, but become happy and immortal as gods. The like delusions he practices from age to age with suc-

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cess, upon the unexperienced sons of Adam and Eve; so that they also flatter themselves with the hopes of happiness, by eating "forbidden fruit;" and in doing those things, of which God hath faid, that the end of them is death. It would be your wifdom to take warning by the fate of our common progenitors: And also to trust the experience of those in all ages, who having made the trial, have found that vi-cious pleafures are but pain in the end; particularly the experience of that great KING, and PREACHER* to young men, who, after fo much trial, faid : " Vanity of vanities, all is va-" nity"—" I have feen all, the works that are "done under the fun, and behold all is vanity " and vexation of spirit." Hear then, my beloved brethren, what the same wife, great and royal PREACHER calls " the conclusion of the whole matter";— the refult of all his observations, inquiries, reflections and experience- " Fear God, " and keep his commandments; for this is the " whole of man. For God shall bring every " work into judgment, with every fecret thing, " whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

* Solomon.

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SERMON III.

Christian Sobriety further explained; viz.

(4.) Of Repentance. (5.) Of the Faith which is saving. (6.) Of an external Profession of Christianity. (7.) Of Prayer. And (8.) Of universal Obedience to Christ's Commandments.

TITUS III. 6. for citien

Young Men likewise exhort to be soberminded.

Y first discourse upon this subject contained such observations as were tho't proper by way of introduction to the main design. What that was, has also been shewn already; and not only so, but entered up on in the second and last discourse. It will now be proper just to remind you, that the first part of that design, was,

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Somewhat distinctly to explain to my young brethren, the nature of that sobriety which is spoken of in the text; and to recommend it to them in a cursory way.

In pursuance of which branch of it, divers remarks have already been made upon the nature of sobriety, considered both internally and externally; and more particularly, the three following, viz,

I. THAT it is founded in a firm belief of God's being and perfections, his moral govern-

ment, and universal providence.

2. THAT it implies a belief of the gospel of Christ, or the Christian revelation. And

3. That it also implies, thinking soberly of One's self.

THESE things were as distinctly explained as I could well do it, unless I had spent more time upon them. And, without any further repetition, I shall now proceed, by divine permission and assistance, to some other particulars comprehended in *Christian* sobriety: For as to any other sobriety, my young brethren, whether real or imaginary, we shall now have no concern with it. To proceed, therefore.

IV. This fobriety supposes and implies in it, sincere repentance; such a repentance as the Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles preached to the world. In the preceeding discourse I mentioned to you, thinking soberly of yourselves, as a necessary ingredient in true sobriety of mind: And that, as was then shewn, implies a serious consideration of the darkness and depravity of mind

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which are common to you with the rest of mankind. It also implies a consideration of your past sins and miscarriages; and of the state of guilt which you are in, in consequence of having transgressed God's commandments. But something beyond this, is implied in repentance. Let me, therefore, shew, as briefly as may be, what the holy scriptures intend hereby. And,

In general, repentance properly fignifies a change of fentiment, of mind and disposition, in consequence of reflection; an after-wisdom in One that has been in error and vice; and, in one word, the conversion, i. e. the turning of his heart from sin and folly to righteousness and wisdom,—from the power of satan unto God. This, in general, is the true scriptural idea of repentance; as it is, indeed, explained by these scripture-expressions, "repentance from dead "works", and "repentance towards God". But, more particularly,

red from the paths of truth and virtue; or a conviction of the mind and conscience, that a person has done amiss; that he has done what he ought not to have done, and neglected those things which he was in reason bound to do. Some persons have indeed been much more criminal than others: their deviations from their duty have been more numerous, and their faults of a more heinous nature. But all are in some degree culpable. And no person ever did, or can repent, without being sirst convinced of his errors.

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2. REPENTANCE implies, not only a sense of having done amis, but of having therein transgressed God's commandments, which are holy, just and good: Or, in other words, of having sinned against God. Even an atheist, continuing such, may be convinced of his having transgressed the laws of right reason, and of justice; but he cannot repent; which implies a conviction of the mind that One has sinned against God, or transgressed his laws, considered as such: "For sin is the transgression of the law" of God.

3. REPENTANCE implies shame, and remorfo of conscience. And this is, indeed, very closely connected with a conviction of mind, that One has violated the commandments of the all-wise, holy and good God. The penitent sinner finds himself pierced and wounded at the heart; or, in the language of scripture, "pricked in the heart", as with a poisoned arrow, or a deadly dart.

4. IT implies self-condemnation, a sense of ill-desert, an apprehension of God's righteous displeasure, and sear of "the wrath to come." However easy or secure the sinner were before, yet when the holy law of God, and his own sins are at once brought into his view, the very sight is as it were mortal to him. This is the two-fold state, or rather, these are the successive states of mind, which the apostle Paul represents in the emphatical words following: "I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

5. Tho' repentance implies remorfe of conscience, and self-condemnation, it is essentially

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different

different from dispair. True repentance is ever attended with a degree of hope towards God; despair implies a fear of wrath void of hope, which is the state of devils. That carries the foul to God, as a merciful and gracious being, who delighteth not in the death of finners: This drives it from him, and plunges the sinner into a state of greater guilt and misery than he was in before. The despairing sinner has, if I may so express it, both his eyes fixed on the holy law, or justice of God: The true penitent, but one of his; the other being turned on God's mercy, or grace, manifested in the gospel. So that repentance and faith, tho' often treated of distinctly, and the really distinct in some respects, mutually infer and imply each other, when we speak of that repentance and faith which are truly evangelical.

6. TRUE repentance implies an ingenuous forrow for, and hatred of all fin in general, as it is most unreasonable in itself, and contrary to the holy nature of God; not merely as it ex-

poses the finner to his wrath and curse.

7. It is, accordingly, attended with a fincere and fixed resolution, by God's grace and help, to forsake all the known ways of vice and folly without exception. If I may so express it, repentance cuts "of the right hand," and "plucks out the right eye": It severs betwixt the heart and every former lust, how beloved soever; or how sovereign an empire soever it once maintained over the blinded and enslaved soul.

o. THE sincere penitent is resolved, not only that he will "cease to do evil", but by God's grace, "learn to do well"; and live in obedience, to all his commandments.

It should be farther observed,

THAT such a repentance as this, which is the gift of God by the ministry of the gofpel, under the conduct and influence of his Holy Spirit, constitutes that renewed state of mind, which the scriptures express by a "new heart", being "born again", the "new creature", the

" new man", and the like.

Now true repentance is absolutely necessary in order to true fobriety of mind. Our Lord Jesus Christ preached the necessity of it himself, faying, "Except ye repent, ye shall all-perish." He commanded his apostles to do the same thro'out the world, with this addition, that the remission of fins should be proclaimed at the same time in his name. This he did, in the most explicit manner, not till after his refurrection; as in the following words: "Thus it behoved " Christ to suffer, and to rise again the third day: "And that repentance and remission of sins " should be preached in his name; among all " nations—And ye are witnesses of these things." " And behold I fend the promise of my Father " upon you: but tarry ye-untill ye be endued "with power from on high †." The apostles punctually followed his directions in this, as in other respects. For immediately after they had received "the promife of the Father", - the Hely Holy Ghost sent down from heaven in conformity to his promise, on the day of penterost, we find them preaching thus; "Repent, and " be baptized every one of you in the name of " Jesus Christ, for the remission of sinst": And again soon after, to the same purpose, thus: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that "your fins may be blotted out-" * They did the like wherever they preached, whether to Jews or Gentiles. And accordingly the apostle Paul, giving an account of his own doctrine, does it in this comprehensive manner: "Testifying both to the Jews," faith he, " and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith-

toward our Lord Jesus Christ. §"

CERTAINLY then, you cannot imagine yourfelves fober-minded, without that repentance which Jesus Christ and his apostles taught thus, as a grand, fundamental part of the religion of finful creatures. Be affured that, whatever you may believe concerning God and his Son Jesus Christ, concerning the common degeneracy of mankind, or any other matter, you will yet be the subjects of no sobriety deserving the name of Christian, without godly forrow for your own fins respectively, and a deep repentance fuch an one, in general, as was briefly described before; and particularly fuch an one, the confequence of which shall be the actual forsaking of every known wicked practice. If you have no other fobriety of mind, than what will confift with an habitual indulgence of your lusts, this is

a strange fort of sobriety indeed ssuch as neither the scriptures, nor common sense, knows any thing of. What a solecism would it be, to speak of a sober-minded young man, still "walking in the way of his heart, and in the fight of his eyes; " and resolved in those wicked courses, for which God. has positively declared, he " will bring him into judgment'? You would not, furely, think it any commendation of you, to be characterised as sober young men, and then to have your sobriety explained after this manner: You would immediately and justly conclude, that you were reproached in the bitter language of farcasm and irony-And God grant, there may be very few fuch fober-minded young men amongst us! Imagine not therefore, you have any fobriety that is worthy the name, till you have repented of all your fins in dust and ashes; till you find in yourselves a fixed resolution to forsake them; till you implore the forgiveness of them with truly broken and contrite hearts; till, you cast yourselves on the grace of God as manifested thro' Jesus Christ, saying in the humble spirit of the Publican, "God be merciful to me a finner!" Nor, in a word, till you internally and truly confent to that method of falvation which the gospel reveals. Every thing short of this, will leave you destitute of christian sobriety.

AND this leads me to speak a little more distinctly than I have hitherto done, of that faith which the scriptures speak of as having the remission of sins, justification and eternal life connected with it. Which faith, tho' it includes, yet certainly intends much more than, what is

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usually called a speculative belief of the christian revelation; the necessity of which latter, was spoken of in the foregoing discourse.

To proceed therefore,

V. CHRISTIAN sobriety of mind, implies in it that faith, which is often spoken of in scripture as justifying and saving. Let me explain this matter to you under the following observations: For a thing of so great importance ought not to passed over with a cursory mention of it.

1. SINFUL men, as such, need a mediator between God and them; a redeemer and favifour from sin and death. God is, indeed, perfeet in goodness and mercy, even essentially, or in his own nature. But according to the reprefentations of scripture, it was not consistent with his wisdom and majesty, or the dignity of his laws, and the honor of his government; (the due support of which, by the way, is actually for the good and happiness of the intelligent creation in general) It was not confishent herewith, I say, for God to overlook, or to forgive the transgressions of men, without the intervention of a mediator; who should do and suffer what might have a tendency, and be sufficient to vindicate the honor of his laws, by exciting and preferving in all, a just veneration for his government, at the same time that guilty creatures were made partakers of his lenity and grace.

2. THE Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the one and only person, who sustains this character of a mediator betwixt God and sinners. "For there is one God, and one mediator be-

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"tween God and men, the man Christ Jesus; " who gave himself a ransom for all, to be resti-" fied in due time †". He is the " propitiation " for the fins of the whole world"; having died for all, " the just for the unjust, that he might " bring us to God".-- " Neither is there falvation" "in any other: For there is none other name " given under heaven among men, whereby we and Iclus Chall, " must be faved." *

3. THE Lord Jesus Christ was appointed and ordained to this office by God, even the Father, from the original clemency and goodness of his nature; by him to manifest the riches of his grace to those that were obnoxious to his righteous displeasure, or in a state of sin, condemnation and death. " For God fo loved the " world, that he gave his only begotten Son, "that whofoever believeth on him, should not " perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent hot "his fon into the world to condemn the world; "but that the world thro' him might be faved." ‡ And, " In this was manifested the love of God " towards us, because that God sent his only be-" gotten Son into the world, that we might live "thro' him. Herein is love, not that we loved "God, but that he loved us, and fent his fon to "be the propitiation for our fins." § The mediation of Christ, therefore, is the effect, the consequence of God's love and grace to finful men, not the cause or ground of it, as it has often been represented, not a little to the dishonor of God's goodness, and of his free, rich grace to the children of men.

^{† 1} Tim II. 5,6. * Acts 4. 12. ‡ John III. 16, 17. 9 1 John 4. 9, 10.

- 4. God himself having appointed his Son to the mediatorial office, there can be no doubt but that he is in all respects duly qualified for it: And "able to fave them unto the uttermost, that "come unto God by him," To which end, " it " pleased the Father that in him should all ful-" ness dwell".
- 5. THE holy scriptures frequently speak of the Lord Jesus Christ, as sustaining a threefold character, or relation to mankind; and as executing three high and important offices in the capacity of a mediator between God and men. He was " a prophet mighty in deed and word, "before God and all the people". He is the high priest, the " great high priest of our profession": And he reigns as a king; God having " given him all power in heaven and in earth"; or " put all things under his feet, and [particu-" larly] given him to be head over all things to

" the church." †

6. THE revealed method of obtaining the forgiveness of fins, deliverance from wrath, and a title to cternal life, thro' Jesus Christ, is most usually expressed in the new testament by the terms "faith", "believing" on him, "receiving him," and " coming to him." - " That whofoever believeth on him, should not perish," &c .-"Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."—" As many as received him, to them gave he power" [the high and glorious privilege] " to become the fons of God, even to them that believe on his name."—" Ye will

not come unto me, that ye might have life."—
"Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." These various expressions are undoubtedly synonimous, or sig-

nify in general the fame thing.

7. THESE expressions being compared with other passages of scripture, and the whole tenor of the new testament, can intend nothing short of a fincere acquiesence in, or affent and consent of the heart to, that method of falvation which is revealed thro' Christ: For it is " with the heart " that man believeth unto rightcousness". So that the faith which in scripture is faid to justify and fave, might be defined in the following manner, conformably to the foregoing remarks; viz. Faith is the act of a felf-condemned, humbled and repenting finner, flying to, and casting himself upon the free grace of God in Jesus Christ; whom he trusts with the concerns of his soul, as the only, and every-way sufficient Saviour of finners, provided and appointed by the Father; internally receiving and fubmitting to him in the whole of that character, as he is revealed in the gospel, viz. as a prophet, priest and king: Which faith implies in it the new birth, or the renovation of the heart, and is a living, operative principle of love and obedience; never failing, when there is time and opportunity for it, to produce good works, or a virtuous, holy and godly life. - Let me diffinctly, tho' briefly, explain the feveral parts of this definition.

THAT faith which has forgiveness, justification and salvation connected with it, then, is an

"act"; the act of the foul, or mind. In which respect it agrees with believing, assenting, or confenting, in any other case whatever: all which are real acts or operations of the mind. Our Saviour himself calls believing a "work," in answer to that question, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God":—"This is the work of God," said he, "that YE believe" on him, whom he hath sent." † Moreover,

IT is the act of "a self-condemned, humbled and repenting sinner." None but such an one can, in the nature of the thing, truly believe in Christ as the saviour of sinners, or have any desire, how much need soever he may have, to be saved by him. It is, accordingly, those that 's labor and are heavy laden' with a sense of sin, that Christ invites to come unto him, or believe on him, saying,—" And I will give you rest."

Again,

It is the act of such a sinner, "flying to, and casting himself upon the free grace of God." It is implied in his being "felf-condemned," &c. that he trusts not in himself, or in any innocence or righteousness of his own: So that all his hopes must necessarily terminate at last, on the mere grace and mercy of God. And faith is that act of the soul, by which it has recourse to this mercy, or humbly depends upon the God of all grace, for pardon and salvation. But

It is on the mercy, or free grace of God "in Jesus Christ," that the repenting sinner thus casts himself by faith. However certain it may

be upon principles of reason only, that God is a good and merciful being; yet the true believer trusts in his mercy, as it is revealed and manifested thro' Christ; "coming unto God by him." †

AGAIN: He casts himself on the grace of God in Christ, whom he also "trusts with the concerns of his soul." Faith implies a sinner's relying or depending upon the Lord Jesus Christ as a Redeemer and Saviour. And that, in

the next place,

As the "only, and every-way sufficient Saviour of sinners." The true, penitent believer does not doubt of Christ's being in all respects a suitable and adequate Saviour of sinful men: (For to do so, is the essence of insidelity.) And as the only one, in conformity to the apostle's words, "Neither is there salvation in any other."

Moreover,

HE trusts in him thus, as the Saviour "provided and appointed by the Father." This is implied in what was said before; and so needs not to be insisted on. Only it should always be remembered, that Christ does every thing in the affair of man's salvation, in conformity to the sovereign and gracious pleasure of God, even the Father—"Who gave himself for our sins," says the apostle—" according to the will of God and our Father." *

THE penitent believer in Christ as a Saviour, does at the same time, and thereby, "internally receive and submit to him in the whole of that character.

character, as he is revealed in the gospel." Christ, as a Saviour, is not divided, nor are his offices or benefits divided. Neither does christian or saving faith respect him, considered in one of his capacities exclusively of the other; but in all of them in conjunction; as the one undivided mediator, in conformity to the doctrine of the gospel; viz.

" As a prophet, priest and king." Now, internally to receive and fubmit to him as a " prophet", is to confider and regard him as fuch; to give intire credit to whatfoever he has faid, fo far as it is known; fincerely to defire to " learn of him", and to be instructed by him in the things which pertain to the kingdom of God, As faith respects him in his "priestly" office, it means depending upon the mercy of God for pardon and falvation through his facrifice, atonement, or blood shed upon the cross, and his intercession with the Father in consequence thereof. And faith, as it respects him in his regal or "kingly" character, means subjection, or dutiful and loyal submission of heart to him, his authority and government; or a fincere confent of the mind to be ruled and governed, as well as protected, and finally faved by him. Nor did ever any person properly receive and submit to the Lord Jesus Christ, or believe on him, in any one of these characters, (such is their connection) without doing so with respect to them all.

Again:

Such a faith as this, implies or connotes, "the new birth", or that "renovation of the "the heart" by the Spirit of God, so often spoken

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ken of in scripture. This is evident from a consideration thereof, as it has now been briefly explained. And the same thing is also connoted or implied, in the saith spoken of in scripture as saving—" To them gave "he power," says St. John, "to become "the sons of God, even to them that believe "on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the slesh, nor of the will of man, but of God †".—" Who-"soever believeth that Jesus is the Christ" [truly and properly believeth it] "is born of "God ‡".—" Ye are all the children of God "by faith in Christ Jesus. "—" And if chil-"dren, then heirs," &c.*

This faith is of consequence, as was said before, "a living, operative principle of love and obedience; never failing, where there is time and opportunity for it, to produce good works, or a virtuous, holy and godly life. For, "Whosoever is born of God, doth not " commit fin " +: But-" overcometh the " world; and this is the victory that over-" cometh the world, even our faith" !- " In "Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth " any thing, nor uncircumcifion; but faith " that worketh by love." " Wilt thou know, "O vain man, that faith without works is " dead" ?- " By works was faith made per-" fect." * It must be particularly observed, however.

[†] John I. 12, 13; ‡ John 5, 1. || Gal. 3. 26. * Rom. 8.
17. † 1 John 3. 9. ‡ Chap. 5. 4. || Gal. 5. 6. * Sc:
Jame: 11. * 4.

however, that a finner is no fooner the fubject of fuch a faith, than he is actually in a state of pardon, justification and salvation, whether he lives afterwards to perform good works, or not. If he lives, he certainly will perform them, having fuch an holy and operative principle in his heart. For it is a contradiction to suppose, that a person who was once a rebel, should at length internally submit himself to Jesus Christ as his king, and yet not act as becomes a loyal subject of his kingdom, by doing his commandments. But if he has no opportunity for this, by reason of death, he is yet equally fafe, equally justified: His faith; the loyalty and obedience of his heart, virtually contain all good works. And, by the way, from this fcriptural account of the faith which justifies and faves, appears the great error of those, who speak of justification as antecedent to repentance, faith and regeneration; it being manifestly subsequent, or posterior thereto, in order and conception, according to the fcriptures.

SUCH, my young brethren, is that faith, fo much spoken of in the new testament; that faith which is truly justifying and saving; and without which there is no falvation. For he that doth not believe thus, or in the true sense of scripture, is "condemned already." No kind or degree of repentance or reformation, intitles any person to salvation, independently of faith: It is by means of this

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faith, which indeed includes or supposes repentance, that finners are delivered from condemnation and wrath. This, therefore, is indifpenfably necessary, in order to your being fober-minded in a christian sense. Whoever falls short of this, falls short of christian fobriety. For furely, that cannot be a truly christian sobriety of mind, which leaves a finner in a state of guilt and condemnation. Any fobriety which a person may be the subject of, and yet perish in his sins at last, as a despiser or neglecter of the salvation revealed

thro' Christ, is essentially defective.

WHATEVER concern then, you may have upon your minds about your past fins; tho' your external practice may be much reformed; and tho' you may be really desirous of eternal happinets: (as who is not?) Yet if you do not give the confent of your hearts to be faved by Jesus Christ, in the way that the gospel makes known; if you do not sincerely, penitently and humbly cast yourselves on the mercy of God, receiving and submitting to Christ as a prophet, priest and king; you are not fober-minded in the full and just fense of the text: You are not yet actually in the spiritual kingdom of Christ and of God, tho' you may not be far from, but near to it, and in a hopeful way of finally inheriting the bleffings of it. This is not, however, a state to be rested in as safe or secure. you are burthened with a fense of fin and H 2 guilt,

guilt, and fear the wrath to come, remember the gracious words, and hearken to the invitation of Him, who once faid, and still faith, " Come unto me - and I will give " you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and " learn of me - and ye shall find rest unto " your fouls: †" That is, in other words, Become my true disciples and followers: believe in me, and fubmit yourselves to the laws of my kingdom: Doing which, you will enjoy great peace of mind at present, and inherit everlatting life.

You will observe, that what has been said under this head of discourse, relates immediately, not to your external practice, but to that faith which is truly faving, and is itfelf the substance or essence of Christian sobriety internally confidered; the root and principle of all true holiness, or Christian

obedience.

IT is therefore to be observed, in the next place, that Christian sobriety implies in it,

VI. An external confession of Christ's name, a profession of the religion which bears it, and an explicit dedication of One's felf to the service and glory of God in him. No person of adult age has any right to be looked upon as a fober-minded or real Christian, till he has given reason for others to think him such, by making a christian profession in conformity to the order of the gospel, or the command-

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ment of our Saviour, and the laws of his

kingdom. And here,

1. It is required, not only that you believe in Christ, but voluntarily, or by an act of your own, take upon yourselves the character of his disciples and followers, by " naming his name" in a folemn and public manner, or "before men"; thereby visibly devoting yourselves to God in him, and laying yourselves under obligation to conduct your selves in other respects, as becomes the profelled followers of him, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. The Lord Jesus Christ not only encourages fuch a public confession of him, by a gracious promise on one hand; but discountenances the neglect hereof by a most awful threatning on the other. "Whosoever shall confess me " before men," faith he, " him shall the Son " of Man also confess before the angels of " God. But he that denieth me before men, " shall be denied before the angels of God." † In another evangelist it is, - " before my " Father which is in heaven." # He fays, nearly to the same purpose, elsewhere. " Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of " my words, of him shall the Son of man be " ashamed, when he shall come in his own/ glory and his Father's, and of the holy an-" gels." * These are very solemn warnings against disowning Christ, his name or " his H 3

[†] Luke 12. 8, 9. 1 Matt. 10th Chap. * Luke 9. 26.

words," even in times of fore trial and perfecution for righteousness sake; to which times they more particularly refer. But, to be ashamed of, to disown or to neglect confessing them, when there is nothing of that fort to be feared, is doubtless far more criminal and dangerous. It is manifest from the whole current of the new-testament, that the faith of the heart is to be accompained with the confession of the tongue; and that as necessary to falvation, except in extraordinary cases. " If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the " Lord Jesus, "says the apostle," and shalt be-" lieve in thine heart that God hath raised him " from the dead, thou shalt be faved. For " with the heart man believeth unto righte-" outness, and with the mouth confession is " made unto falvation." * Indeed, in any who know this to be the will and commandment of Christ respecting them that believe on him, the contempt or wilful neglect thereof, is absolutely inconsistent with a sincere regard to him and his authority: It is, in its nature, inconfistent with such a faith in him as the fcripture speaks of as saving; which faith respects him as truly in his regal, as in his prophetic or facerdotal character.

2. Tho' it is positively injoined upon those who believe in Christ, to confess him before men; yet it is not to be supposed necessary, or the thing intended hereby, that persons

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^{*} Rom. x. o, 10

should stand up in the midst of an assembly,

and, vivá voce, or in express words uttered by themselves, declare their faith in him.

For some cannot even speak at all, and much

less in such a public manner. Neither can it

be supposed necessary for them to profess their

repentance, faith and experiences in a long writing, under their hands ;-- a common

practice formerly in this country, but growing daily more and more into difuse; and not without fufficient reason, as being attended with divers inconveniences, which need not be particularly mentioned. Therefore,

3. Nothing more, or farther, can be supposed necessary as to this matter, than that people should, in a solemn, public manner, and by fome fign, or fignificant gesture, commonly understood, make such a declaration of their faith in Christ; signifying their consent to the covenant of grace established in him, and their refolution, by the help of God, to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless; or to conduct themselves in all respects according to the laws of Christ's kingdom. This may be effectually done, without any speaking or writing on their part, in public. And as nothing beyond this can reasonably be sup-

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posed to be required, by " confessing Christ

" before men"; fo neither can any thing

short of it be supposed to come up to the thing

really intended thereby, in any natural con-

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Aruction of the words, or in confidency with the practice of the christian church from the earliest times.

4. UNDER this head, I must not omit particularly to mention the christian ordinance of baptism, which our Lord instituted as the outward, visible sign of initiation into his church, or a mark of discipleship to him; faying to his apostles, "All power is given " unto me in heaven and in earth: Go ye " therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing " them in the name of the Father, and of the " Son, and of the Holy Gnost". The known practice of the apottles afterwards, being compared with this injunction, shews that our Lord designed water-baptism therein. For, that they actually baptized with water, is evident from many passages in the new-testament; not only in the Acts, but Epistles of the apostles: And doubtless they did so in obedience to Christ's command, which they understood much better than the modern deniers of water-baptism. Mr. Robert Barclay has descended to cavil and trifle upon this subject, in a manner much below a perfon of his learning and good fense: Afferting that tho' John's baptism was by or with water, Christ's was to be without water, or meerly an internal and spiritual baptism. His principal argument to establish this doctrine, is grounded on the words of John Baptist himself: " I " indeed "indeed baptize you with water unto repen"tance; but he that cometh after me—shall
baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with
"fire"†. According to which distinction and
opposition, he insists, that as John's baptism
was by water without the Spirit, so christian
baptism is folely by the Spirit without water.
So that there neither is, nor ought to be, any
baptism under the Gospel dispensation, and in
conformity to Christ's commandment, besides
that of the Spirit, or the Holy Ghost; this being it self, and this alone, christian baptism.

To overthrow which fophism, I need remind you only of two passages of scripture, both in the Acts of the apostles. Soon after they themselves were baptized with the "Ho-" ly Ghost and with fire"; i. e. received the Spirit, which appeared to them in the form of "cloven tongues, like as of fire"; we find them preaching thus to the people: "Re-" pent, and be baptized every one of youl, " in the name of Jefus Christ for the remission " of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Ho-" by Ghost". According to which, the Holy Ghost was to be given them in consequence of their being baptized in the name of Christ. Therefore receiving christian baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost, do not mean precifely the same thing, as it is pretended; one of them being prior to the other, and a means thereof. And what could that be, but waterbaptism in Christ's name, in consequence of which, the persons baptized were to receive spiritual baptism, or the Holy Ghost?

But there is another passage which still more clearly refutes the learned Barclay's comment upon the above-cited words of John. We are informed that St. Paul " came to E-" phefus, and finding certain disciples, he " faid unto them, Have ye received the Holy "Ghost fince ye believed? And they said, "We have not fo much as heard whether " there be any Holy Ghost. And he said " unto them, Unto what then were ye bap-" tized? And they faid, Unto John's bap-" tism." Be pleased particularly to observe what immediately follows, in which there is an express reference to the words of John: " Then faid Paul, John verily baptized with " the baptism of repentance, saying unto the " people, That they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on " Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they " were baptized in the name of the Lord Je-" fus. And when Paul had laid his hands on " them, the Holy Ghost came upon them †". Now, could there possibly be a plainer distinction than this, either, first, betwixt John's baptism, and baptism in Christ's name afterwards; or, fecondly, betwixt these persons being baptized in Christ's name, and their receiving the Holy Ghost? This was subsequent to the other,

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and not till after Paul had laid his hands on, as well as baptized them. Christian baptism then, and receiving the Holy Ghost, were not the same thing; but the former of them, ordinarily at least, prior to the latter, and an instituted means thereof: And what could that be, but water-baptism? Whereas, upon Mr. Barclay's principles, it was John's baptism only, that was by water; Christ's being

entirely spiritual.

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Upon the whole then, the plain fense of John's word's, on which so much stress has been laid by the Quakers, may be expressed thus—I indeed baptize you with water only unto repentance: But Jesus Christ will soon institute another baptism, which, tho' performed by an external washing with water, as mine is, shall yet have far more glorious effects. For penitent believers in Christ, being baptized in conformity to his institution, shall, in consequence thereof, receive the Holy Ghost — There is nothing harsh in this para-, phrase; the difference betwixt John's and Christ's baptism is sufficiently preserved thereby; and there is a necessity for such an one, in order to account for the apostles baptizing with water, as they certainly did. Let me add, that if this be an instituted means of obtaining the Holy Spirit, it may be justly feared that those who neglect and despise it, have some what less of the Spirit among them, than they would be tho't to have: Tho' I do

not

not presume to judge any; for to his own

master every one standeth or faileth.

Your duty then, in this respect, is clear: All who believe in Christ, not having already been baptized with water, are obliged to be fo, in obedience to his command. -Tho' as to the far greater part of you, my young brethren of this fociety; I conclude you were baptized in your infancy: So that you are not to be exhorted to be again baptiz-But there are many of you, who have not yet made this as it were your own act, by visibly taking upon yourselves the bonds of the christian covenant. And the neglect hereof, in those that are come to adult age, is not very confishent with christian sobriety. Nor can you be tho't to have your felves confessed Christ before men, in the manner required by him, by being devoted to him by your parents or others, in your infancy.

5. THERE is a considerable number of those that may be justly accounted young men, tho' not unmarried, who, in order to obtain baptism for their children, have made a profession of their faith in Christ, and solemnly bound themselves to observe all the laws of his kingdom; and yet turn their backs upon the Lord's table from year to year, as if this were no christian institution ;-- as the' Christ had never faid, " This do in remembrance " of me"; and as tho' the inspired apostle had not said, " As oft as ye eat of this bread,

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" and drink of this cup, ye do shew the Lord's " death, till he come." It is not very eafy to reconcile this neglect, with the supposition of your having been sincere and in earnest, when you engaged to obey all Christ's known commandments and institutions ;-- upon supposition that you allow this to be one of them, as you cannot deny it to be. I have often, and very particularly shewn what your duty is in this respect; tho' with much less success than was defired. However, I will not be weary or discouraged in reminding you of it; hoping that the time will come, when what is feriously said to you upon this head, will be as feriously attended to; and have a proper influence upon your practice : Which will be a better evidence of your being truly foberminded, than any that you can well give, while you habitually absent yourselves from the fellowship of Christ's church and people in one of his ordinances.

INDEED, if unchristian terms of christian communion are insisted on in any church or churches, your not being incorporated with them, provided it is solely for this reason, will not be your fault, but that of the imposers of such terms. Nor can it be denied, that there has been a great deal of this kind of antichristian imposition and tyranny practised in different ages; particularly in respect of creeds, or articles of saith. For, instead of being contented with such a simple, plain and apostolic confession as this, "I believe

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that Jesus Christ is the Son of God"; or even with a general and serious profession of saith in the holy scriptures as the word of God; many churches have imperiously required an explicit profession of unscriptural articles of saith, as the pretended "form of sound words"; tho' almost barbarous enough, perhaps, both in expression and sentiment, at once to wound the ear, affront the sense, and shock the hu-

manity of an Hottentot!

But, furely, it is time that all protestants, especially protestant-dissenters, should make the holy scriptures the standard of a found faith and christian practice, in opposition to ALL OTHER forms of found words; as some are pleased to mis-call the reveries of poor crazy monks and lunaticks, half-distracted schoolmen, superannuated enthusiasts, and proud, factious, avaritious zealots for a party, pretending to make black white, and white black; and then foolding at, and curfing all the world, that would not implicitly believe their unholy ravings, and submit to them as the true, uncorrupted catholic faith !- God, in his own time, which is approaching, will put an end to all these antichristian usurpations in his church. Christ's " fan is in his hand, and he will thoro'ly purge his floor." And happy is it for those who, in the mean while, neither exercise such tyranny over others, nor fuffer under it; at once allowing to all, and enjoying themselves, that just and reasonable I,

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made his disciples FREE from every such

yoke of bondage. "

VII. CHRISTIAN fobriety implies frequent and fervent prayer to almighty God in the name of Christ, for the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for light, support, fanctification, comfort; in a word, for all needed bleffings, temporal and eternal: Together with devout and grateful praises for all bleffings enjoyed of every kind, to the Father of lights, from whom " every good gift, and every perfect gift cometh down." An habitual neglect of prayer, is absolutely inconsistent with the spirit of christianity. And if ever you are really fober-minded, you will find in yourfelves an heart, a disposition to pray, and to give thanks to "God and our Father for all "things, in the name of ourLord JefusChrist." It will not be a grievous task or burden to you, as it is to a fecure and hardened finner. So far from this, that you will find yourfelves uneafy if you are long without pouring out your hearts before God. You will not only pray to him in public with his people, and in a more private manner, if you have opportunity; but in fecret. And even when you are engaged in the lawful and necessary business of life, your hearts will frequently be lifted up to God in the heavens, in holy defires, grateful praises, and good resolutions: Thus, in the language of the apostle, "praying

" ing always with all prayer, and supplica-" tion in the Spirit, watching thereunto

" with perseverance." *

I MIGHT mention many other particular duties, as belonging to the head of christian sobriety; for, indeed, there is no one duty, but what belongs to it. But, instead of descending to more particulars, I must ob-

ferve now in the last place,

THAT christian sobriety implies living a truly religious, virtuous and holy life, in conformity to the precepts of the gofpel, the laws of Christ's kingdom. OurLord frequently cautioned his disciples against depending upon an external profession of faith and religion, without good works, without obedience to his commandments. " every one that faith unto me, Lord, Lord, fays he, " shall enter into the kingdom of " heaven; but he that doeth the will of, my " Father who is in heaven. Many will fay " unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we " not prophefied in thy name, and in thy " name cast out devils, and in thy name done " many wonderful works? And then will I " profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye that work iniquity". + So that, whatever wonderful works men may do, yet if they neglect good works, or still work iniquity, they are not true disciples of Christ. How many devils soever they cast out; yet if they leave one to reign in their own hearts, fo that

^{*} Eph. VI. 18. + Matt. VII; 21, 22, 28.

that they "do his lusts," they are most expresly excluded from all hopes of eternal life. Indeed, living in the practice of any known fin, is absolutely inconfistent with true repentance, and that faith which is faving, according to the account before given of them. "How shall they that are dead to fin, live any longer therein?" Or how shall they that are " alive unto God by Jesus Christ," not live to God, or not obey his known will in every respect! It is impossible: If the tree be good, the fruit will be good; if the heart be renewed and fanctified, the life will also be renewed and holy. The love of God and of man, understood in their proper and just extent, and confidered as principles in the heart, the effects of Christian faith thro' the influences of the holy Spirit, do in a fort comprehend all Christian dutics and virtues. Known, wilful and habitual disobedience to God in any respect, is inconfistent therewith; inconfistent with christian fincerity, and therefore with fobriety.

IF, therefore, you aspire to the character of being sober-minded, "having believed in God, you must be careful to maintain good-works:" You must keep his commandments in view, endeavouring, by his grace, to glorify him in all things; to form your temper, and whole course of life, according to those reasonable, just and good precepts which Christ has left his disciples to walk by; not forgetting his own admirable example of piety, purity and humility; of meekness and charity, of temperance and patience; nor allowing

lowing yourselves in any thing which you know, or in your consciences believe, is contrary to the will of God. For, as was intimated before, doing fo, is absolutely inconsistent with integrity and uprightness of heart, as well as with that holiness of life which God has required of all whom he hath favoured with the light of the gospel, and called to his eternal kingdom and glory by Jefus Christ.

I HAVE now done with the first general head of discourse proposed, having somewhat distinctly explained to you the nature of that fobriety, to which even "young men" are to be exhorted.

LET me conclude for the present, with some short reflexions on what has been faid upon it.

And, 1. You would do well, my young brethren, to apply this to yourselves respectively, in the way of ferious felf-examination. It becomes you to confider both your past and present ways; what fentiments and dispositions are predominant in your hearts; and by what rules and maxims your lives are directed: That so you may be able to judge, what your own true characters respectively are; whether you are truly religious and virtuous, or fober-minded, or not. For, as has been observed more than once, true religion, and true sobriety, are not really different; but effentially one and the same thing.

IT shall now be taken for granted, that you do not disbelieve the being, perfections and providence of God, or the general truth of the chriftian revelation; and also, that you have some just

conceptions

conceptions of the common frailty and degeneracy of mankind. Neither of these things shall in the least be called into question—But have you fincerely repented of your own fins before God? Have you, in a deep sense of your guilt and unworthiness, fled for refuge from his justice to his grace and mercy, thro' his Son Jesus Christ; and internally consented to that method of falvation which is revealed in the gospel? Have you also confessed Christ's name before men, in the manner required by him; and vifibly dedicated yourselves to God in him? Do you live in the frequent practice of fincere and fervent prayer? And do you conscientiously endeavour to walk according to all Christ's known commandments? It would be convenient for you to put fuch questions as these to yourselves, as in the presence of God, who is greater than your hearts, and knoweth all things.

2. Those of you who can truly answer these questions in the affirmative, (as I hope some of you can) may assure yourselves that you are indeed sober-minded; and have great ground of comfort, peace and joy, as being the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life. I might address and congratulate you in the language of St. John, in his sirst epistle:—"I write unto you young men, "because ye have overcome the wicked One." And again, "I have written unto you young "men, because ye are strong, and the word of "God abideth in you, and ye have overcome "the wicked One." Happy you, my beloved I 2 brethen.

brethren, who even in youth have, thro' grace, attained to that state and character, which so many other persons, tho' advanced in years, are yet far from! But,

3. BE not high-minded, but fear. A fober mind, is always an humble one. Boast not of your religious attainments, as the shameful and hypocritical manner of some is: And if you ever glory even in tho't, let it be only in the Lord. " For what hast thou, that thou didst not receive?" Be fensible of your imperfections; and beware of a relapse into any sinful courses—" The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my foul shall have no pleasure in him." † There is still ample room in the best of you, for improvement; for increase of sobriety, knowledge, strength, and all christian virtues. Endeavour therefore, to make progress in the ways of wisdom and holiness: For he that stands still, instead of pressing forward in the christian race, is on the point of going backward. And it were doubtless "better for any not to have known the "way of righteousness, than after they have "known it, to turn from the holy command-"ment delivered unto them." ‡

4. As to those of you, my young brethren, who cannot pretend to be fober-minded according to these scriptural marks and rules of sobriety; you have no reason to be satisfied with your present condition, or to think it safe. For there is no real fafety in any state below that of true christianity; or in any thing short of that repentance, faith, and renewed state of mind, with which eternal life is connected by the promifes of the gospel. If you should die short of this, you would die in your fins; unpardoned, uninterested in the redemption wrought out by Christ: And what the consequence of this wouldbe, you need not, furely, to be now informed! But,

5. Les r I should be misunderstood, I must tell you, I do not mean hereby, that if you are deficient in any of these respects, or fall short of fuch a truly christian state, you are of consequence destitute of every degree of sobriety that is of any confideration; and so are to be ranked in the fame class with the most profligate and abandoned finners. God forbid! The holy fcriptures, in numberless places, suppose a measure of knowledge, conviction of fin, ferioufness of mind, and defire to know the will of God and the way of life, antecedent to a faving illumination and repentance, faith and regeneration; and yet preparatory thereto; which things, being confidered in this view, are truly valuable and important. And indeed, they are the effects of God's gracious influences upon the heart; in conformity to what is faid of Lydia in the Acts, "That the Lord " opened her heart to ATTEND to those things " which were fpoken by Paul." Our Saviour alfo tells fuch a ferious, inquisitive person, that he was " not far from the kingdom of God." Nor do the holy scriptures leave us any room to doubt, but that all persons living under the gospel, who are so far convinced of their sinful state, and so desirous

defirous of obtaining eternal life, as fincerely and perseveringly to seek God's face and favor, shall actually attain to a faving knowledge of him. If any of you are in such a state of mind as this, there is just and great reason to hope, that being already near to God's spiritual kingdom, you will ere-long be actually translated into, and become the happy subjects of it forever. But, as was said before, this is not a state to be rested in. You may, without all doubt, relapse into your finful courses after such a partial reformation: In which case, "the latter end will be worse with you than the beginning." It highly concerns you therefore, to befeech the God of all grace, both " to keep you from falling," and to "give " you repentance to the acknowledging of the "truth;"—the truth as it is in Jesus; that knowing him, and the only true God in and by him, you may obtain eternal life.

6. If even such thoughtful and serious young men as were last mentioned, are not yet, however, in a state of safety, or at present entitled to glory, honor and immortality; how far, alas! are those from being so, who do not at all confider their ways, nor fo much as make the important inquiry, "What they shall do to be faved?" —those who live in the allowed gratification of their lusts; and, instead of seeking after God, if haply they may find him, rather " fay to the " Almighty, Depart from us; for we defire not "the knowledge of thy ways!" Alas! my young brethren, if there are any present, to whom this

this character justly belongs; (for I neither particularly know, nor accuse any;) your condition is truly deplorable. For is it not so, to be in a state of enmity against God your Creator? against Him, in whom you live, move and have your being; Him, from whom you can neither fly, nor effectually hide yourselves in any secret place, not even in the dens and rocks of the mountains, or tho' the rocks and mountains should, at your entreaty, fall on you and cover you; -and against whom you can make no refistance; Him, who is at once omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient, as well as infinite in holiness and righteousness! It is dreadful indeed, to be "enemies to fuch a Being in your minds, by wicked works!"

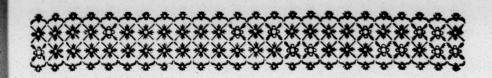
But left the very thought hereof should too much overwhelm you; left the " spirit should fail before God, and the fouls which He hath made;"† let me remind you, that God is no lefs good and merciful, than he is holy, great and powerful. He " will not contend forever, neither will he be always wroth:" He is even now waiting to be gracious to you;—to every one that will attend to the voice of love, and turn at his reproof, how numerous foever your fins have been. His mercy is at once higher than the heavens, and lower—" deeper than hell;" as it faves those who are deserving of it! The blood of Jesus, that hallowed fountain, in which so many millions of polluted fouls have been cleanfed and healed, has not yet lost its purifying, falutary virtue; nor will it do so, while there are any sin-

† Ifai. LVII. 16.

ners on earth willing to be cleanfed and faved by it; nor even after there are none! The Holy Spirit of God is, I doubt not, now striving with your hearts, and, if I may fo express it, moving upon the face of the chaos, ‡ towards the production of the new creation in Christ, as it once did at the time of the old, to the perfecting thereof. O then, my young brethren, let not this be your condemnation at the great day, That you at once despised the riches of God's goodness, leading you to repentance; -accounted the blood of the covenant wherewith you might have been fanctified, an unholy thing ;—and did despite unto the Spirit of grace, by which you would otherwife have been fealed to the day of redemption!

‡ Gen. I. 2.

SERMON IV.



SERMON IV.

Of some things contrary to Christian Sobriety, viz. (1.) Of taking God's Name in vain. (2.) Of neglecting the public Worship. (3.) Of light and irreverent Behaviour at it. (4.) Of excessive, riotous Mirth at other Times. (5.) Of sinful Diversions or Recreations. (6.) Of excessive Expence and Pride in Apparel. (7.) Of the neglect of Business, and Missipence of Time.

TITUS II. 6.

Young Men likewise exhort to be soberminded.

Y young brethren, having, in the first discourse, made some remarks on the text, introductory to my main design; and having, in the second and third, somewhat distinctly explained to you the nature of that so-briety which is here spoken of, as also recommended it to you in a cursory way: I proceed now, by divine assistance, as was proposed in the second place,

SECONDLY,

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SECONDLY, To point out, particularly, some of the many sins, follies and criminal excesses, which are repugnant to christian sobriety; and against which young men especially, may need to be cautioned.

This, it is conceived, may, by the bleffing of God, be very ferviceable to you, not merely by shewing you what you ought not, but what you ought to do; and fo giving you a still more diftinct idea of christian sobriety. For, to every vice that is to be avoided as contrary to this fobriety, there is an opposite virtue or duty, which ought to be practifed as a branch of it: And, it is well known, that in all cases in general, contraries ferve for the illustration of each other. So that when you are shewn what things you ought to avoid, you will the more clearly discern what that manner and course of life is, to which you are exhorted: Nor shall I fail, as I go along, particularly to remind you of the duties and virtues, to which the fins that are to be mentioned, stand in opposition. And if some of these sins and excelles have been hinted at already in any of the preceeding discourses; yet that will not render a more particular caveat with respect to them, superfluous or improper.

LET me farther premise, That tho' in the enumeration of these sins and sollies, it is rather my intention to give you friendly warning as to the suture, than to accuse, reproach and upbraid you, as to any saults which you may have been guilty of in times past; yet it will be highly proper for you to make the application to yourselves

respectively,

SER. IV. Of taking God's Name in vain. 123

respectively, so far as you have been really guilty of any of these crimes. You ought, with shame and ingenuous sorrow, to acknowledge them to God; humbly imploring the forgivness of them thro' Him, who once appeared to put away sins by the sacrifice of himself. For he that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall sind mercy with the Lord; who "is not willing that ANY should "perish, but that ALL should come to repen-

" tance."—Let me begin then,

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I. WITH the mention of an heinous fin more immediately against God; I mean that of "taking his name in vain." To use the name of the great and holy God irreverently or lightly in common difcourfe; and more especially to swear by it rashly, falsely, wantonly, or without lawful occasion; to imprecate the curse of God, either upon yourselves or others, whether in jest or in earnest; together with whatever commonly goes under the name of profane language: All these things, I say, are doubtless prohibited in that well known, and yet often violated command of the decalogue, "Thou shalt not take " the name of the Lord thy God in vain." And the words immediately following, clearly and strongly express the high displeasure of the Almighty against those who break this commandment, together with the certainty and greatness of their punishment, unless it be prevented by deep repentance—" For the Lord will not hold "him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain." There are many other passages of scripture, in which

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which this species of common and gross impiety,

is feverely prohibited and condemned.

"HE that planted the ear, shall he not hear?" -particularly shall he hear and punish the profane oaths and curses, the abominable imprecations of ungodly finners! If wicked men are to give an account in the day of judgment, even of " every idle word" that they speak, as our Saviour positively declares they shall; how much rather shall they give an account of such impious, such abominably wicked words, as I am here speaking of! And what religious sobriety, do you think, can possibly be in the mind of that person, whether old or young, whose mouth is thus filled with curses, and other profane language?—in the mind of One, who scruples not to trifle with that venerable name, at which holy angels bow with love and reverence, and devils themfelves tremble, and are horribly afraid!—in the mind of One, who upon any flight discontent or uneafiness, or perhaps without any fort of provocation, calls upon the great God to damn either himself or another, or the like? Certainly, there can be no true fobriety in those persons, whoever they be, that addict themselves to these practices, faying perhaps with the wicked of old, "Our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?" The use of such language evidently discovers the want of all due reverence to the great God, and a mind depraved to a fad degree, upon any supposition that can be made. There is no tolerable excuse for it; nothing that can be faid by way of apology for those that are chargeable with it, but but what will much more effectually shew their

great guilt and impiety. For example:

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If it should be faid, that they really mean nothing, when they lightly use the name of God, and imprecate the vengeance of heaven upon themselves, which is the most favourable suppofition; yet does it not discover a total absence of reverence to God, and of all ferious concern about his favor, his bleffing or his curse, when people can often use his name without thinking of Him, and speak of his curse, or of damnation itself, without meaning any thing thereby! What? have the name of God frequently in their mouths, and yet not have "God himself in all their thoughts!"-often speak of his bleffing and curse, of heaven and hell; and yet not think of them, or mean any thing thereby! What a totally irreligious?—what a "reprobate," undifcerning, blinded, and monstrously depraved mind does this imply? How near is it to right down Atheism? But it will perhaps be said, that tho' some persons do really think of God, of his wrath and curse, when they speak of them; yet they are only in jest, when they use such language, and intend not as they fay. What? jest with the holy and venerable name of the great God! and speak of his bleffing and curse, of heaven and hell, for merriment and diversion! Is not this to make the matter still worse? Would it not, of the two, be less criminal to have no defign at all, than such a one as this? Doubtless it But you will fay, perhaps, that they use such language, because it is by some reckoned fashionable fashionable and polite; and to avoid the imputation of being precise, notional and whimsical. Be it fo. The time has indeed been, tho' I hope it is not the case at this day, when those who scrupled to curse and swear profanely, were stigmatized as puritans and fanaticks; the enemies of the church at least, if not of the state !- But how does this help the matter? What? trifle with the most facred and awful things, profane the name of God, and break his commandments, for the fake of being thought polite and fashionable! or for fear of being thought precise; that is, in other words, being thought to fear God and his displeasure! For this must be the true and only meaning of preciseness, in the present case. And what a monstrous pitch of impiety must that man be arrived at, who is ashamed and afraid of being thought to fear God and his wrath? and who will break his known commandments, profane his holy name, and trifle with the most facred things, to convince some [fupposed] polite and fashionable people, that he does not fear him!—Is not this worfe and worfe? Without doubt. What then, shall next be said by way of apology for profane swearers?—that they are in earnest, and really wish God would damn them or others, when they imprecate his vengeance? It were needless to say any thing to shew their madness and impiety upon this supposition: Which are as great as any that the devils themselves are guilty of!

This practice is no less irrational, or contrary to the light of nature, than it is to the revealed

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will, and express law of God. And it is one of those enormous fins, against which young men need to be particularly warned. It is not, indeed, a crime that is peculiar to them. persons that are advanced in years, are notoriously guilty of it: Yea, it is faid, there are certain creatures both old and young, appearing in female apparel (for I will not proffitute the respectable name of women, by giving it to them) who are no ordinary proficients in this kind of impiety! But whoever are, or are not addicted to it, You, my young brethren, must either wholly refrain from it, or else renounce all pretensions to fobriety, and confess that you have no love or reverence for, no fear of God before your eyes. The most untutor'd savage in the woods of America, might with as much reason, and as good a grace, assume to himself the character of a refined politician, or a shrewd philosopher, as any profane fwearer and blasphemer could pretend to be religious, or fober-minded. The fear of the Lord is the very "beginning of wisdom:" And if that finds any place in your hearts, you will have a facred veneration even for his name, as well as for Him: You will never mention it, or speak or think of the great GOD, but in a sober and reverent manner. It will be as impossible for you, either in jest or earnest, either for no end at all, or to please fools and madmen, to fwear lightly by the name of God, or to call upon him to damn yourselves or others, as to lay violent hands upon yourselves. And yet how common a thing is it to hear both old and young, and even children in the streets, who can hardly stammer out an oath or a curse, using this kind of language? All of them without exception, hereby making it manifest, that they neither sear God nor regard man, however well-bred they may conceit themselves; and are destitute of the sirst principles, not only of grace and so-briety, but of decorum and good manners: For this practice is an affront to every reasonable and virtuous man, as well as an heinous, aggravated offence against Almighty God.

II. ANOTHER sin, against which you are to be cautioned, is, neglecting the public worship of God upon the "Lord's day;" either staying at home in idleness, or unnecessarily employing yourselves in worldly affairs, when you ought to be with the people of God; joining with them in praising and praying to him, or in hearing his word read and preached, for your instruction and edification in the things pertaining to his

kingdom, and to your eternal good.

You know, doubtless, that as early as the time of Moses, i. e. above three thousand years ago, God appropriated one day in seven to be observed as an holy sabbath to himself, or a day of rest from common secular business, and to be spent in religious exercises: Saying, "Remember the sab-"bath-day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou "labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, &c."†

[†] Exod. XX. 8.--11. N. B. Notwithstanding what is said in Gen. II. 3. concerning God's "blessing the seventh day and sanctifying it;" and notwithstanding public social worship is in itself a most reasonable thing; yet it does not appear from scripture, that any sabbath was actually instituted by God, or any particular set time held sacred for that purpose by good men, before the law was given by Moses.

It feemed not improper to remind you of this original institution of a sabbath; Tho' I must acknowledge, that I think christians have no concern with the fabbath, most properly fo called, (I mean the Mosaic or Jewish sabbath) any more than they have with circumcifion, the paffover, and other facrifices, &c. All these things were but " a shadow of good things to come." And when Christ the body, the substance came; when his church, most properly so called, in distinction from the Jewish, was established, those things ceased: At least, the Gentile converts were under no obligation to observe any one of them; no, not even the moral law; considered merely as a part of the law of Moses. For if they had, they would have been also bound to observe all the others for the same reason. So that if Gen+ tile Christians are obliged to any of the things which were enjoined in the law of Moses, as they doubtless are; yet they are only those, that are either of moral and eternal obligation, or elfe adopted, and taken into "the law of Christ," and considered as a part of his institution. The Mosaic, or seventh-day sabbath, is neither of these If it were, properly speaking, of moral obligation, it would be so to all nations in all ages; univerfally and perpetually binding, so that the law relating thereto, could no more be either repealed or changed, than those commandments which require us to leve God and our neighbour. And there are few, if any persons, who pretend to fay, that Christ or his apostles ever enjoined Christians to observe the seventh-day sabbath instituted hardly stammer out an oath or a curse, using this kind of language? All of them without exception, hereby making it manifest, that they neither fear God nor regard man, however well-bred they may conceit themselves; and are destitute of the first principles, not only of grace and sobriety, but of decorum and good manners: For this practice is an affront to every reasonable and virtuous man, as well as an heinous, aggravated offence against Almighty God.

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UPON what footing then, you will ask me, do I affert an obligation to observe "the Lord's day," or "the first day of the week," in a religious manner? I answer, intirely upon a Christian basis; upon a footing quite distinct from that on which the Jewish sabbath was instituted and observed. Let me briefly explain this matter.

It is in general consonant to the light and haw of nature, that God should be worshipped, &c. in a social, public manner. And if so, it is convenient and necessary, that some particular times, and even places, should be more especially appropriated to that use, or end. For otherwise, people would not know when or where to go, in order to meet with others to join with them in these offices of religion. It evidently appears also from the new testament, to have been the will of Christ and of God, not only that social worship should be upheld under the gospel dispensation, but more particularly, that "the first day of the week," on which our Saviour

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Saviour arose, and was "declared to be the Son of God with power," should be religiously, gratefully and joyfully observed, in praise, prayer, &c. For this day is divers times mentioned in the new testament, as the day on which Christians assembled together in a more especial manner, in the first age, for religious purposes. †

IT must be remembered also, that the primitive christians came together thus on the first day of the week, under the immediate eye, countenance and direction of the inspired apostles; who used to meet and pray with, teach, exhort and preach to them, thereon: At which time also the Lord's Supper used to be celebrated. So we read particularly, [Acts XX. 7.] "And upon the first "day of the week, when the disciples came together "to break bread, Paul preached unto them, &c."

THIS example of the first Christians, considering all circumstances, and particularly their meeting on this day, under the immediate inspection of, and with the inspired apostles, is sufficient to give that day the preference to any other, for the purposes aforesaid: Especially when we consider it as the day of that grand and important event, the very basis of the Christian religion, Christ's refurrection; from whence it is called "the Lord's day." Public, focial worship being a duty, and fome particular time being needful to be fixed on for that end; here are positive reasons for the first day, rather than another': And no man can pretend any particular reason against this, or object against it; except upon the footing of the antiquated Jewish sabbath, with which we have

† Compare John XX. 1. Acts XX. 7. 1 Cor. XVI. 2. & Rev. 1.10.

fay; not precept. Now, instead of insisting upon it, as I think One might do with great reason, that this example, all circumstances being considered, ought to have the force of a command

with us; I observe,

THAT the words of the apostle [Heb. X. 23, 24 & 25,] can be considered as nothing short of a positive precept, to the purpose aforesaid. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without " wavering—And let us consider one another " to provoke unto love, and to good works: Not "forfaking the affembling of ourselves together, " as the manner of some is; but exhorting one " another"-Now, these words ought, in all reason, to be understood and interpreted in conformity to the known general practice of the Chriftian church in that age; which was to affemble for the exercises of religion on " the first day of the week" more especially, tho' not exclusively. So that in any natural and fair construction of this passage, the apostle must be considered, (1.) As giving his intire approbation of this general usage among Christians; as one way in which they were to "hold fast their profession," to excite one another "to love, and to good works," &c. (2.) As folemnly warning Christians against neglecting to meet together for the faid purposes on the first, or Lord's day-"Not forfaking the affembling of ourselves together." And (3.) As blaming and reproving certain of the loofer, and less sincere professors of christianity, who even in that age absented themfelves

selves from these assemblies of the faithful-" as the manner of some is"—This is no forced or laboured, but an easy and natural construction of the apostle's words. So that this practice, so feat fonable in itself, and conducive to many important ends, civil and temporal, as well as religious and eternal, wants neither apostolic example nor precept for its support; and even to bind it upon the consciences of all who acknowledge sub-

jection to Jesus Christ.

WHY then should any as it were turn Jews, or become "Moses's disciples," for the sake of establishing an illiberal, Mosaic sabbath, to be obferved with an unfcriptural, Jewish, and even Pharifaical rigor, altogether aliene from the genius of the gospel; instead of contenting themselves with "the Lord's day," to be observed with grateful praifes, with religious joy and festivity, as that day was observed by the body of Christians for two or three centuries at least? What need is there for having recourse to Moses and his law, for the divine institution of any sabbath that Christ's disciples ought to observe! Tho', by the way, "the Lord's day" is not properly called the fabbath. It is never called fo in scripture; and giving it that name fince, has been the unhappy occasion of filling many people's heads with Jewish and antichristian notions about it-

BUT not to digrefs: It being plainly the will of Christ and of God, that the Lord's day should be observed, as has been shewn, entirely upon the plan of the gospel; it will be an heinous sin in you, if you neglect the public worship thereon;

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spending that time in idleness, in unnecessary worldly labors, or in diversions, which you ought to spend in the exercises of religion with the people of God. If you do thus, you will not in any measure deserve the character of being fober-minded. Forfake not therefore, the affembling of yourselves with them on this day, as the manner of some, I might say, of many is. For even in this town, where the Lord's day is, perhaps, as generally and regularly observed as in any other place without exception, it is supposed by some, that at least a fourth or fifth part of the people, tho' they can hardly look out at their windows or doors without feeing one or more places of public worship, are yet hardly feen in them twice a year. And yet possibly these very persons may be so strangely deluded as to think themselves Christians! Let me tell you, myyoung brethren, that whatever wrong and fuperstitious notions some may entertain about a particular fabbath under the gospel; yet a due observation of the Lord's day, is a most material branch of christian sobriety. The neglect of it is of pernicious consequence in many respects; as is feen in some parts even of New-England, where, by this means, the people are but little better than favages. The due observance, or the neglect of the Lord's day, will probably have a very extensive influence, good or bad, upon your whole temper, and general conversation. And it is evident from long experience and obfervation, that those persons who are remarkably negligent of this branch of christian sobriety,

SER. IV. Of irreverent Behaviour at it. 135.

are generally very defective in all others: The exceptions are very few, if any. † But,

III. It is not only a common and unnecessary neglect of the public worship, that is inconsistent with christian sobriety: All light and indecent

+ The SABBATISMOS, fabbatism or "rest," which is faid to "remain to the people of God," Heb. IV. 9. means not any particular day to be observed by Christians as a sabbath, in distinction from other days; but in general, an holy rest from fin, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus, as "the end of the law for righteoufness;" and more especially, that future rest from all pain and forrow, which is promised to the faithful in the kingdom of heaven. And fabbaths are particularly mentioned, Col. II. 16, 17. amongst other Judaical and ceremonial things, which were only a "fhadow" of the better things to come by Christ; and to be then discontinued-" Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in "drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, " or of Sabbaths: which are a shadow of things to come; "but the body is of Christ." The same apostle, Gal. IV. reminding Christians that they were redeemed from the law, that they might " receive the adoption of fons," ver. 5. and ver. 7. Says, "Thou art no more a fervant, but a fon"-And he then upbraids the Judaizers and Sabbatizers in the following words: " How turn ye again to the weak and " beggarly elements, whereunto ye defire again to be bro't "into bondage. Ye observe days, and months, and times, "and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon "you labor in vain:" Ver. 9, 10, 11. If a man will obferve any fabbath upon the plan of the Mosaic law, or with a Jewish, servile rigor, I insist on it, that he ought, upon his own principles, to be circumcifed also, and " to keep. " that whole law."——As far as I am acquainted with the learned Mr. Calvin's fentiments respecting "the Lord's day," my own are very nearly the same with his: Except that I cannot go fo far as that learned man is faid to have done, in countenancing recreations thereon-And I am far from thinking it unreasonable, or any hardship, if, in Christian countries, the civil authority interpofes to prohibit people from fuch worldly labors and diversions on the Lord's day, as would be an interruption to the devotions, or religious exercises of others.

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decent behaviour in the house of God, when you come to worship before him, is so likewise.-Barely attending, or being present at, the public worship, however constant you may be therein, is no certain evidence of religion, or fobriety. What fignifies a merely bodily presence without the heart? You are to glorify God, not only in your bodies, but also, and more especially in your spirits, which are his. "For God is a Spirit, and "they that worship him, must worship him in " spirit and in truth." There is no more sobriety in coming to the place of public worship on the Lord's day, independently of the views and defigns which you have in it, than there is in going to an ale-house or opera. People may have either reasonable and good, or foolish and wicked defigns in coming to the public worship; and may, accordingly, be either well or ill-employed while they are at it. If they come with an intention to do honor to God, to pray to and praise him, to be instructed in the knowledge of his holy will and the way of life, with a fincere defire to walk therein; and if they accordingly give their attention to these things while they are in the house of God, there is no doubt but their intention is good and laudable; and thus far they are sober-minded. But what if it should be pride or vanity, that brings them to the place of worship; -- that they may shew an agreeable perfon and air, or a fashionable suit of cloaths? What if it should be, the "lust of uncleanness;" -that they may indulge the rovings of loofe defire in a promiscuous assembly? What if it should

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should be, right down impiety; -that they may divert themselves with the seriousness of others, and fecretly make a mock at the facred word of God, read or preached? Would perfons be the more fober-minded, for coming to the place of worship with such views as these! They are all of them supposeable. In the first-mentioned case, it is plain, they come not to worship God, but to be worshipped themselves. In the second, they come not to pay a pure and spiritual homage to the holy One of Ifrael, but an impure and carnal one to Venus and her train. In the third, it is manifestly, not to serve God, but the devil by dishonouring Him. And what worse things than these, could a young man do at an ale-house or an opera! He might possibly be much more innocently employed at either of them, even on the Lord's day.

Now, the best interpreter of your views in coming to the public worship, will be your external behaviour thereat; I mean the best interpreter hereof to men: For God is greater than your hearts, and knoweth all things, even your "thoughts afar off." If you should come into the house of God with a light and careless, or a vain and oftentatious air: If you should often come very unfeafonably, when great part of the public worship is over; and, by your indecent noise and blustering, as if you aimed to have the eyes of the affembly turned upon you, interrupt the devotion of others: If you should make it your practice to stare idly or lasciviously about you, to laugh, or the like: If you should do thus, I say, instead of coming seasonably, and in a decent manner; instead of behaving with gravity, joining with apparent devotion in prayer and praise to God, and giving a becoming attention to his word read or preached; what evidence would this be of your fobriety? Would it not rather be a proof of the vanity, levity and impiety of your hearts, than of a fober-mind?—an evidence, that you had no fense of religion, and of the important ends of public worship? So far would fuch a behaviour, in coming to, and while at the public worship, be from a proof of your fobriety, that it would be a clear evidence of the contrary. And, in this case, you might justly apply to yourselves with shame, those words in the Proverbs of Solomon—" I was almost in all " evil in the midst of the congregation and as-"fembly." † Which words the wife man introduces, as part of the supposed confession of a foolish young One, in the deepest anguish of foul;-One, who had "hated instruction, and " his heart dispised reproof; who had not obey-" ed the voice of his teachers, nor inclined his "ear to them that instructed him:" As in the verses immediately preceeding.

LET me therefore, my young brethren, warn you against such an unseemly, such a criminal behaviour at the public worship; lest your coming there, when considered in all its circumstances, instead of being the least evidence of the sobriety, should be a full and incontestable one of the vanity, great depravity and impiety of your minds. If you aspire to the character of being sober-

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minded, you are to attend the public worship constantly, unless necessarily detained from it; to come to, and behave yourselves at it, with a decent gravity. And, let me add, that you are to observe the like decorum in going from it, instead of leaving the house of God with laughter and merriment, as if you were going from a comedy, or a loose play, instead of a prayer, a fermon, and the worship of your Creator. This I the rather mention, because it is notorious that fome young men in the town, tho' I do not fay, of this Society, often go from the public worship in fuch a rude, and almost riotous manner, as is quite shocking, not only to people of real sobriety, but to all that have any fense of decorum. And how must that behaviour appear in the eyes of the holy God, which is so justly offensive, not only to them that truly fear him, but to all persons that have the least sense of decency, or propriety of behaviour?—that which would hardly be confistent with decency, in the open streets, at any other time!

IV. I MAY here naturally take occasion to caution you against excessive, extravagant and riotous mirth in general. For it is certain that there is such a thing as this, which both proceeds from, and tends to evil; and is censured as criminal in the word of God. Christian sobriety stands in opposition to all such foolish and outrageous mirth. Not that chearfulness and laughing are, in all cases, inconsistent with true sobriety; far from it. Solomon observes that there is "a time to laugh," as well as "a

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time to weep;" which he would not certainly have faid, if laughing and chearfulness had been eriminal. For there is no "time for" lying, for profane swearing, or for any thing that is immoral in its nature. It is far from being a duty for any, and particularly for young men, to appear always with a grave face, a gloomy, forrowful or dejected countenance. I have a very contemptuous opinion of this face-religion; tho' it feems to be almost the only religion of some people. We know how much of it the Scribes and Pharifees had of old; and our Saviour speaks of it as one instance of their hypocrify, that they "disfigured their faces;" or affected to make a grave and devout appearance, while their hearts were full of pride, covetousness and malice. The Jesuits, and other religious orders of the church of Rome at this day, are also abundantly stock'd with this fort of religion: And yet we have no reason to entertain a very high opinion of their piety, or the fanctity of their manners. And, in whomfoever an uniform gravity of countenance is affected, it is a much furer mark of cunning, knavish defigns, and imposture, or at best of folly, than it is of religion or wisdom. It is doing violence to nature, without any good end: For man has been defined " a rifible animal," with as much juffice and precision, perhaps, as "a reasonable one." And I cannot but think it very comely and agreeable, as it is far most natural for people, especially the young, to be gay and chearful; provided only, that it is not at unfeafonable times, or beyond

yond the bounds of a decent moderation. Yea, it answers very valuable ends with relation to bodily health, and in divers other respects.

BUT yet, my young brethren, as was faid before, there is certainly fuch a thing as unfeatonable, extravagant and finful mirth, For you cannot suppose that the wife man had no meaning, when he centured himself for indulging to mirth in the following words: "I faid in mine " heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth; " therefore enjoy pleafure: And behold, this al-" fo is vanity. I said of laughter it is mad, and " of mirth, what doeth it? + And again :-- "The "heart of fools is in the house of mitth." It is "better to hear the rebuke of the wife man; " than for a man to hear the fong of fools. For "as the crackling of thorns under a pot, fo is "the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity." In conformity hereto, a Greater and Wifer than Solomon has faid, "Wo unto you that laugh " now; for ye shall weep and lament." \ It would doubtless be trifling, to prescribe particular times and limits, or to give formal rules for mirth and laughter; and, in a fermon, this might, perhaps; provoke them both very unfeafonably. It is, however, certain in general, that this naturals comely and ufeful passion, ought to be under the restraint of reason, as well as the other passions; and, that sobriety of mind implies fuch restraint. I know of no better general direction relative to this matter, than this ;-to remember that you are "reasonable," as well as "risible creatures;" and to have an habitual sense

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of God's prefence with you at all times, and of moral, religious obligations. This may be a fufficient, and perhaps the best guide and security, against all unbecoming levity of mind, all unseafonable and excessive mirth.

LET me, however, just remind you of one negative rule relating to this matter, which is implied in the general one above. And that is, that you are never to indulge your own mirth, or to provoke that of others, by finging profane, loofe, immoral or obscene songs; nor even willingly hear them. For even "the rebuke of the wife, is better than the fong of fools." And, "Is any merry," fays the apostle, "let him fing pfalms." It would, indeed, be a piece of weakness and superstition to suppose, that this which St. James recommends, is the only way in which mirth and joy can be innocently indulged. But yet it gives me a fair opportunity to recommend to you the learning of psalmody, that agreeable and useful art: Which might not only be the means of our carrying on this part of public worship in the most decent and edifying manner; but prove a delightful entertainment to you in private, and a means to prevent your spending some of your hours in fuch mirth, as can hardly be accounted innocent-The transition from hence to diverfions and amusements, of which the young of both fexes are so fond, will not be unnatural. Wherefore,

V. IF you would deserve the character of being sober-minded, you are to refrain from all finful ful diversions, or recreations. For christian sobriety doubtless stands in opposition to every

thing that properly falls under this head.

BUT, lest you should think me unreasonably austere, I will plainly own to you, what is indeed implied in the manner of expression just now used, -" finful diversions,"—that every thing is not finful, which goes under the name of diversions. Neither reason, nor the law of God, absolutely forbids every thing of this fort. Nay, I will go further: The present frail, and imperfect condition of human nature, which will not, cannot fubmit to an uninterrupted application to labor, or to grave, serious and weighty matters, seems to require some relief, some relaxations of this kind. And certainly, if they are lawful or innocent in any persons, they are so in the young, who need them most. I am therefore far from thinking, a young man ought to be superciliously condemned for being sometimes at a concert of music, or a dance. It may be added, that persons of a studious, recluse, or any sedentary way of life, almost universally need, once in a while, to take some fort of bodily exercise, not merely as a relaxation to the mind, but for health. in this sense, "bodily exercise profiteth" much, how little foever it may profit in any other. If people can, at the same time, promote this valuable end, and innocently amuse, relax and unbend their minds, so as to return with new spirits and vigor to their stated business, there is neither law, gospel nor reason against it. And it is a maxim, that those exercises of the body, with which which the mind is in some measure gratified, usually contribute most to the recovery and prefervation of health. In which view, riding, dancing, hunting, fishing, and divers other manly exercises, according to peoples different tastes, have
been often recommended by the ablest physicians,
and found salutary by the experience of many
persons. †

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+ The author hopes that the concessions which he has made above, relative to diversions, will not be offensive to any ferious and judicious christian; who duly confiders the present state of human nature; especially after reading the restrictions in the following paragraphs. If One were to ask, Whether it was criminal for boys of 6, 8 or 10 years old, to whip a top, to play marbles, or the like? Whether it would answer any valuable ends to keep them wholly from these pastimes, and oblige them to apply themselves constantly to their books? Or whether it is supposeable, that prophets and apostles should be commissioned to prohibit these sports of children? +- Every one would, probably, answer in the negative; and confess that this would be the readlest way to make children dunces instead of scholars, by giving them a distaste to their learning, and breaking their spirits, if it did not ruin their health also. The case is, in a degree, the same, not only with young men and women, but even with those who are more advanced in years, unless they are of a very faturnine, heavy, melancholly or fuperstitious make. Even the Old, generally need some kind of relaxations. But, to keep the young wholly from diversions under religious pretences, is quite irrational; and the direct course to make them irreligious, by giving them a distaste to all religion, as a four, gloomy and morose thing. And fome well-meaning men have probably much differred the interest of religion, by their too great rigor and severity in this respect.

It may be farther observed as to dancing in particular, (tho the author himself had never any taste for it) That the wifest and best heathen moralists recommended it, not only as an healthy, but a kind of facred and religious exercise. But it is countenanced by a far greater authority than theirs:

—that of the holy scriptures. The royal psalmist calls upon

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HAVING made these concessions, at once as large as you can reasonably desire, and no larger than ought to be made by those, who will neither "speak wickedly for God," nor be wifer than his word: You must now allow me, on the other hand, solemnly to warn you against what is really criminal, relative to the point in hand, and therefore inconsistent with christian sobriety.

In the first place, then, there are some diversions which are criminal in their very nature; and of the most pernicious tendency. Such, I think, ought to be accounted

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the children of Zion to praise the Lord's " name in the dance-with the timbrel and harp." [Pf. exlix. 2, 3, and cl. 4.] And Solomon fays, There is "a time to dance." [Ecclef. iii. 4.] How then did Christians come to have a more gloomy, austere religion than Jews! Did they learn it from Christ's being at "Cana of Galilee?"—or from his inspired apostles? Neither. And the zeal of some Christians against dancing in general, is the more remarkable, because this is one of the joyous images, under which the Spirit of prophecy has represented the glory and happiness of the Messiah's kingdom; and this even mixt dancing. [Jer. xxxi. 13.] " Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, "both young men and old together. For I will turn their " mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make "them rejoice from their forrow." [See Luke xv. 25.]-How much wifer are fome of our modern fages and reformers, than either David or Solomon, or --! Superfittion, tho' appearing under the larve and disguise of religion, is in fact one of its worst enemies, by making it appear sour and unamiable. And we very frequently fee, both how much occasion there was for certain admonitions, and how little fome regard them—" Be not righteous over much"— [Eccl. viii, 16.]---" Every word of God is pure--- Add thou not unto his words, left he reprove thee, and thou be found a Har." [Prov. xxx. 5, 6.]

ted all forts of gaming for money, or other things of confiderable value. Gaming is not a lawful and honest way, either of getting gain, or of losing One's substance. This is, in too many respects to be now mentioned, a practice fruitful of evil; and therefore to be shunned by all christians as one of the greatest vices. Laying wagers is nearly, if not altogether as criminal. Neither is any kind of diversion to be thought innocent, in which cruelty is exercised towards the animal creation, for no other end than to afford a favage entertainment to the authors, or the spectators of it. Amphitheatrical shews and entertainments, even when no gladiators appeared to fight, either with one another, or with wild beasts, + but only beasts with beasts, were therefore condemned with great reason by Christians, from the earliest times. These, and fome other diversions that might be mentioned, are doubtless finful in their nature; of a very bad moral tendency, and contrary even to humanity, as well as to the genius of the gospel. To these I may particularly add, the frequenting loofe, immoral and profane plays;

Some have supposed that the apossile Paul, where he speaks of his having, "after the manner of men, fought with beasts "at Ephesus," I Cor. xv. refers to his having been exposed to them by his perfecutions in an Amphitheatre, as the heathen used to expose their slaves and captives, for diversion; but was miraculously delivered. He speaks also, a Tim. iv. 17. of his having been "delivered out of the "mouth of the sion." But this lion, and those beasts, were probably only human ones.

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plays; fuch as the greater part of those, perhaps, are, which have been acted upon the stage, even in christian countries. There are doubtless some which deserve a different character; and which might be heard, or feen, not only innocently, but profitably, in any country where the laws did not forbid it. But wherever, almost, plays and theatricalentertainments are publicly allowed, the abuse is fo gross, and the effects so pernicious in many respects, that I cannot but take so fair an opportunity to testify my joy, that the government has interposed to prohibit them here; being perswaded that the allowance of them, especially in this infant state of the country, would occasion much evil, and very little, if any good. Moreover !

As to all such diversions and recreations as may be justly accounted innocent in their nature; it is to be remembered, as was hinted before, that even these may become criminal by the abuse, in divers ways. The following restrictions, cautions and regulations may be helpful to you in avoiding such abuses, and

criminal excesses.

THE first is, that the company with which you frequent these entertainments, consists in general at least, of persons of a decent deportment; such as avoid every thing in speech and behaviour on these occasions, which is justly offensive to piety and virtue. For otherwise you cannot safely, or even innocent-

ly affociate yourselves with them, without some more urgent call than that of amusement. Tho' you should be innocent yourselves, you will be in great danger of contracting desilement and guilt, by frequenting vicious company—" Evil communication, says the apostle, "corrupts good manners:" And Solomon; "He that walketh with wisemen, shall be wise; but a companion of sools?"

shall be destroyed."

ANOTHER necessary restriction is, that you do not frequent these diversions too often, or spend too great a proportion of your time in them. You are not to let them intersere, either with the duties of religion, or with the weighty and necessary business of common life. However innocent any amusement may be in itself; yet you are to remember, it is but an amusement; and therefore ought to give way to business, unless when your application to this, has already been so intense or long, that nature requires relief.

AGAIN: You ought not to attend diversions at unseasonable hours; so as to be late absent from home at night, to the interruption of that good, religious order, which ought to be kept up in christian families; or so as to indispose you for business the following day. The principal end of recreations, according to the proper signification of the word, is to renew, to revive, to refresh One after fatigue either of body or mind; and there-

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by to prepare him for a renewed application to business. It is therefore a great abuse thereof, when they disqualify for business, instead

of being a preparation for it.

LET me add another caution. You should not fuffer the love of any diversions to reign, to be predominant in your hearts; or to engross your thoughts and affections, to the exclusion of those things that are truly noble and important in their nature. To have the heart and affections strongly attached to amusements or diversions, so as to think chiefly of them, and to be impatient for their return, is a mark of great levity, and a frivolous turn of mind, even the One should not transgress any of the foregoing rules by reason hereof; which yet is hardly a supposeable cafe. Nor is this merely a weakness, but a fin: For it implies an absence of the grand concerns of life and godliness from the thoughts; and shews the heart to be immoderately fet upon mere trifles. If you ought to take heed, as certainly you ought, that your affections are not immoderately fet even upon the lawtul business, gains and occupations of this life, in opposition to those things that are above, the high concerns of religion and cternity; much more ought you to take heed, that they are not thus fet upon mere diversions and pastimes; the occasion for which, you are to remember, arises from the imperfection of human nature, fometimes calling for them momentous affairs. Nor should you forget, even in your recreations, that you are in the presence of the omniscient and holy God. Neither should you allow yourselves in any kinds or degrees of them, which render the thought of such a presence uneasy and terrifying to you: For, to you at least, those which do so, are sinful. That which you cannot do, considering yourselves as in God's presence, without fearing his displeasure for it, is certainly criminal in you, whatever it might be in other persons.

IF you would be fober-minded, my young brethren, you are to observe these, or the like restrictions and regulations respecting your diversions: And I should have particularly subjoined one more, relative to them, had it not fallen naturally under, what seems to be of consequence enough to make a distinct

head of discourse, as follows; viz.

VI. PRIDE, and extravagant expence in apparel, or the external adorning of your perfons. This is an heinous fin, very frequently, and most solemnly censured in the word of God. It is a fin against which, not only young women, but young men, are to be particularly warned, as inconsistent with christian sobriety—It were well if some even of the aged of both sexes, did not need the like caution—It is, indeed, far from being a virtue in any, particularly in young men, to appear in rags, in an uncleaply or slovenly dress,

clean and becoming apparel, especially in public. And if this is not in their power, it is a necessity to be pitied, not a virtue to be commended. It may be added, that not only the custom of all civilized nations in all ages, but the holy scriptures themselves, warrant some distinction of dress in persons, answerable to the difference in their stations and circumstances in life. There seems to be a propriety in this; and some valuable ends are doubtless answered hereby, considering the state and temper of mankind, and our con-

nexions in civil fociety.

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But it is the great unhappiness and fin of many young people, that their hearts are fet on gay and coffly apparel, as if this were a matter of mighty consequence. And many of them, instead of being content with such cloathing as is fuitable to their degree and circumstances, to their own or their parents worldly estate, aspire after what is far beyond either; often to the great prejudice of their too indulgent parents, and to their own real interest: I might add, to the hurt of their credit also. For their reputation suffers hereby in the opinion of all wife and difcrete persons, who are acquainted with them and their circumstances. And yet, when they have thus exposed themselves by the gaiety and costliness of their cloathing, wholly disproportionate to their rank and circumstances; they are often still farther unhappy, and the L4

more worthy of derision, by being proud of it; making a fort of merit of their folly and vanity; and treating with contempt, their equals, perhaps their fuperiours, whose apparel is more modest and decent. By this means those good ends which might otherwife be answered in society, by the distinctions of dress, are in a great measure defeated; for this confounds all ranks, destroys due subordination, and even inverts the natural order of things, by fetting poor people of low degree above the rich, and those that are of high; i. e. fo far as mere pride, and fumptuous cloathing, can do it. And besides; how many people have, chiefly by this very means, been reduced to want and beggary? - a very congruous punishment, which the wife Author of nature and of order has ordained for those, who so vainly and wickedly attempt to confound and invert them! All who know any thing of the world, and particularly of this town and country, know that this is a just representation of facts; not at all heightened or exaggerated. I do not mean, that all young men are justly chargeable with this fin and folly, but that it is a very common one amongst us. And all who know any thing of the holy scriptures, know that extravagant expence, and pride in the article of dress, are often forbidden, and feverely condemned in those facred oracles. Yea, the light of nature, or common fense, easily differns these to be egregious follies and vices. Í

I MUST therefore warn you against these things, my young brethren, as quite inconfiftent with gravity and christian fobriety. They are not to be countenanced even in the other fex; for the peculiar cast of whose minds, fome may possibly think, a little allowance should be made: Much less ought they to be countenanced in ours, whose thoughts and cares ought, certainly, to be employed about matters of far greater importance, than the beauty or richness of our apparel, and making a gay external appearance, to catch the eyes of idle, empty starers; and to disgust those of the knowing observer. In a word, sobriety and foppery are incompatible with each other.

ALL the young would do well to remember the fatal garden and the fig-leaves; the fad occasion, upon which the use of cloathing was first introduced into this apostate world. Innocence would have wanted no covering for shame and dishonor. If you consider this, you will not pride yourselves in any kind of apparel, however gay or sumptuous, unless you are of such a frivolous and depraved turn of mind, as to glory in your shame. For your cloathing, as it is the consequence, is also a natural memento, of your first parents fall, guilt and dishonor; and, in some sense, of your own also.

If you are in any degree sober-minded, there is another kind of cloathing which will to far engross your thoughts and cares, as to

leave but little room for any about the quality of your external drefs. I mean that, of which Job fays, " I put on righteoufness, and it " cloathed me: My judgment was as a robe " and a diadem." The same, of which our Saviour speaks under the name of "a wedding garment"; for the want of which, fo many persons, and some of those of the highest rank, even those that are in kings courts, and of royal dignity, will hereafter be excluded from " the marriage supper of the Lamb," tho' at present " cloathed in fost raiment"- That which our Saviour again speaks of, in his message from heaven to the church of Laodicea, faying - " Thou fayeft, I am rich, and " increased in goods, and have need of no-" thing; and knowest not that thou art " wretched, and miferable, and poor, and " blind, and naked. I counfel thee to buy of " me gold tried in the fire - and white rai-" ment, that the shame of thy nakedness do " not appear"— That with which the spouse of Christ, his true church, is adorned: Of whom it is faid, that "to her was granted " that she should be arayed in fine linen, clean " and white; for the fine linen is the righte-" outness of the faints"—And, Bleffed is he " that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, " left he walk naked, and men fee his shame"! UNDER these metaphors and similitudes the facred writers, and our Lord himfelf, reprefents that faith and substantial piety, that virtue, holiness and good works, which the gospel

gospel enjoins upon its professors; and all which are comprehended in being fober-min-To be cloathed with these, to be adorned with this righteousness, is to have the righteousness of Christ, "the righteousness of God " by faith." This is a garment which, unchanged, will ferve for all feafons of the year, and for every climate. It will neither be: worn out nor impaired in beauty, by use and time; but become the firmer, the more, splendid and beautiful. It will endure all weathers, winds, rains and storms, without fading; even eternity will but increase its; lustre. And though, perhaps, it may not entitle you to what is called good company,—the company of the great-little, rich-poor men of this world; yet you need not esteem it the less on that account: For it will be the means of your gaining admission hereafter into the kingdom of heaven; into the fellowship of just men made perfect; of the noble army of martyrs; of the innumerable company of angels; of Jesus the mediator of the new-covenant, and of God the judge of all; whose "face you shall behold in righteous-" ness"! To desire to be cloathed with such a robe as this, and to wear fuch a diadem, is a truly great and reasonable ambition. when you are possessed of it, yea, whenever you fincerely defire it, one of your least concerns will be, " what you shall put on," or " wherewithal you shall be cloathed," in any. other respect. VII

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VII. ANOTHER fin, against which you are to be particularly warned, is idleness, the neglect of business, or mis-spence of time; all which come nearly to the same thing. Time is indeed precious, if eternity itself is of any importance! It ought to be spent in such a manner, as will turn to good account; that is, in a reasonable, pious and virtuous manner: And none of it ought to be spent otherwise, or thrown away. I do not mean, that people are obliged to be always either at their devotions, or their labors, the business of life. Some time is requisite for taking food, for rest, sleep. conversation, and even for recreation and amusement, considering the present impersed state of human nature; as has before been observed. And the time so spent, under proper restrictions, is far from being thrown away or lost: It is spent according to nature. reason and religion. But the article of sleep being excepted, which alone requires more than a quarter part of our time in general, a fmall proportion of it may well fuffice for all the others together, for people that are in health; except, perhaps, for children. whatever time is spent in any of these ways, beyond a reasonable, due proportion, be that what it will, is at the best thrown away and lost; perhaps much worse. It is morally impossible for any person to neglect the proper duties of life, or to live long in idleness, without falling into fuch practices as are positively criminal: For the idle person is not only peculiarly

culiarly exposed to the snares and seductions of the "wicked One;" but does, as it were,

tempt the devil to tempt him.

AND confidering at once, what real calls there are for labor on one hand, the general aversion to it on the other, and the pernicious confequences of idleness, both with respect to civil life and religion: Confidering these things. I fay, it is not without the highest reason. that the holy scriptures abound with strict prohibitions of idleness, and many positive injunctions of diligence. The fatal confequences of floth, both with regard to the present and future life, are also represented in the strongest colors, in the facred oracles. Yea, the experience of all ages, has afforded fenfible demonstration of the ill effects of this vice. A lazy, flothful course of life, is not only abfolutely inconfistent with christian sobriety, as being itself finful in an high degree; but it naturally, and almost necessarily leads to many other vices, as was intimated before. There are very few persons, if any, that can live a considerable time together in a state of inactivity, as ferpents, bears, and some other animals are faid to do in their holes and dens, for many months of the year in cold climates. A man, particularly a young man in the spring, the warmth and highest vigor of life, will ordinarily be doing something, either innocent and good, or bad and criminal, except when he is asleep. And he that neither serves God, nor his generation according to the will of God.

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God, in some honest and laudable way, will of course serve the devil and his lusts, and be much less a blessing than a curse to the world, and to himself.

How many young men have fome of us known, the fad examples of this truth !young men whose ruin, to all human appearance, both as to this world and the next, took its rife from idleness, and the disuse of any lawful calling: Sometimes thro' the criminal and cruel neglect of their parents to put them in any way of business, and to excite them to diligence therein; and often thro' their own native love of idleness and pleasures, and their aversion to any kind of steady application to business. Would to God, I could myself call to mind no very striking and melancholy instances of this fort! And if you, my young brethren, know of any fuch, it will be your wisdom to take warning by them.

But when an idle life is spoken of as repugnant to a sober one, and industry as an important branch of that sobriety which young men ought to practise; it is not meant hereby, that they are all obliged to what is commonly called hard labor; or to employ themselves in mechanical arts or husbandry, in merchandize or navigation. No: There are many ingenuous, laudable arts and employments, tending to the ornament and use of human life, which come under neither of these heads. A just and necessary war, also furnishes employment for many; and it is truly

truly an honourable employment to fight for the defence of One's King and country, for laws and liberty, whether in the field or upon the mighty waters. There are also many civil offices, in the exercise of, or at least in the preparation for which, young men may be worthily engaged. There are also those three, which are commonly called the learned professions, * in the exercise of which, or in acquiring the needful qualifications for them, young men may be laudably employed ‡. Any of these referred to, are lawful employments; and all that are fo, tho' not equally honourable, may yet be accounted fo in some measure; and, of confequence, those persons who faithfully and worthily discharge them, are worthy of honor in their respective stations; in conformity to the apostolic injunction, "Honor ALL MEN. "

Besides: There are some persons, whom God has blessed at once with riches, and with large, sagacious and contemplative minds, who may both very worthily as to themselves, and usefully to the world, devote the greater part of their time to study, to making observations on, and discoveries in, the word and works of God, and communicating their discoveries to mankind; instead of applying themselves to any other business. To such men as these, the world has been, and is, greatly indebted; and the glory of God, at

^{*} Law, Physic and Divinity.

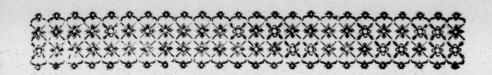
N. B. All under 25 or 26 years are confidered as "young

the same time, is eminently promoted by them. What more honourable or useful employment can there well be, than this?

Now, all that is intended, when the great sin of idleness, and the necessity of a virtuous diligence are insisted on, is, that young men are indispensably bound to be diligent in some one or more of these honest and laudable ways; having fomething habitually in view, which they consider, and to which they give their attention, as a business; and in which they accordingly employ the greater part of their time. Without this, I think, no young man can well deferve the character of being sober-minded: Since, if he lives an idle life, in opposition hereto, he is in such a course of life as is unreasonable in itself; such an one as the holy scriptures have most expressly and repeatedly forbidden; such an one as exposes him to many great and peculiar temptations; such an one as it is almost impossible to continue long in, without falling into some of those practices, which are still more apparently immoral and wicked; fuch an one as will probably be pernicious to those about him, ruinous to himself in this world, and terminate in his destruction in the other.

In a word then, my young brethren, take heed how you employ your TIME. It is at once fleeting, precarious, precious; and even of infinite importance to you, if that ETERNITY is so, which depends upon the use you make of it!

SERMON



SERMON V.

Of some other Things contrary to Sobriety; viz. (8.) Of a disrespectful Behaviour to Superiors. (9.) Of Falsehood and Lying. (10.) Of rash and immoderate Anger. (11.) Of Envy. (12.) Of Intemperance in Eating and Drinking. (13.) Of Uncleanness. (14.) Of Fraud and Injustice. (15.) Of Covetousness. And (16.) Of Enthusiasm.

TITUS II. 6.

Young Men likewise exhort to be soberminded.

In the foregoing discourse I mentioned to you several sins and excesses, against which young men need to be particularly warned, as inconsistent with that sobriety to which they are to be exhorted. In doing this it was my design, not merely to shew you what you ought to avoid, as contrary to christian sobriety; but also positively, what manner of life you ought to lead, as agree-

able thereto: And, at the same time, in a cursory manner, to disswade you from the one, and excite you to the other. There are many more vices, follies and criminal excesses, my beloved young brethren, against which you may need to be cautioned; considering the depravity of your hearts, and the many snares and temptations of this evil world. I shall accordingly, by God's leave and assistance, proceed to speak of some others of them in this discourse, with the same view;—not to accuse, but to warn and advise you. And may He, from whom all light, and true wisdom are derived, cause you to profit by these friendly instructions!—The next sin, against which I would particularly caution you, is,

VIII. A DISRESPECTFUL or contemptuous behaviour towards your superiors, whether in age or in office. Refusing, or even neglecting to give honor to these, to whom it belongs, is an heinous offence against the laws of God, and against fociety, as well as against the particular persons, to whom the difrespect is shewn. fuch refusal, or neglect, generally, tho' not always, proceeds from great pride of heart. Sometimes it may be owing to mere ignorance, or inadvertence; in which case it is much more easily excused by all, than when formally designed; for then it is justly considered as the effect of envy, pride and infolence. But it can hardly be accounted quite innocent, even when it proceeds from inadvertence only: Because all the members of fociety in general, ought to know and consider what is due from them to others; and therefore therefore the giving honor to whom honor is due, and fear to whom fear, is the subject of a

christian precept.

Some persons have, indeed, made a strange pretence of religion and conscience for declining the use of most of those external gestures, motions, &c. which custom has established as marks of respect, civility or good manners; scrupling to bend their bodies, to uncover their heads, or the like, even in the presence of their king: Tho' the great patriarch Abraham, the father of the faithful, stood up, and bowed himself even to the children of Heth. † On the same pretence they decline giving the customary titles, expressive of civil regard and honor, such as Sir, Master, and the like; fearing that this also would be a kind of idolatry. These are at best groundless and superstitious conceits, tho' there is doubtless a medium to be observed as to things of this fort; for there is hardly any thing, however innocent in its nature, in which there may not be a foolish, or even criminal excess. But in general it is, doubtless, not a sin but a duty, to shew regard to those to whom it is due, in all those ways which the different customs of nations have established as external marks and signs of a civil respect; provided only, that they are not in their nature evil. To refuse to give those tokens of respect, which are thus established, if innocent in themselves, is actually contrary to the true spirit of the apostolic precept before mentioned, concerning giving honor to those to whom it is due. For this giving of honor, cannot be thought to refer M_2 intirely intirely to an inward esteem or veneration, of which there are no visible tokens or signs; but must be supposed to comprehend the customary external proofs and manifestations of such a regard; only under the restrictions hinted at above. And let me add, that wife and good men in former ages, to speak in the most moderate terms, were never fo whimfical and superstitious as to think what is now commonly called decency and good manners amongst men, offensive to God. It is plain that they conformed to all the innocent civil customs in general, established in the countries where they lived; and particularly to those, the neglect of which might have justly been construed into pride, sourness, an undue contempt of, or difrespect to those, with whom they had any intercourse. Not to shew courtefy to our equals, and much more, to decline giving due honor to our superiors in such ways as these, may be justly accounted an immoral thing, a violation of God's commandments.

ALL other circumstances being alike, age has doubtless a right to expect regard and deference from youth. This is agreeable to that order which the Author of nature has established. is also required in the word of God, that the young should honor the aged. And there is one command to this purpose, expressed in such a manner as is worthy of a very particular attention: "Thou shalt rife up before the hoary head, and " honor the face of the old man, and fear thy "God." + A difrespectful treatment of the aged, is represented in scripture as no light or trivial misdemeanour, misdemeanour, but an heinous sin in the young; more especially if the aged, whom they treat with contempt, are also good men, the servants of the most high God. For "the hoary head is most " eminently] a crown of glory, if it be found in " the way of righteousness." And all the young would do well to remember the curse of God, which befell those children who, in contempt and derifion, formerly faid to the venerable man of God, "Go up thou bald-head, Go up thou " bald-head."

IF then, you would deserve the character of being fober-minded, or rather, if you would actually be so, you are not to treat your superiors in age with contempt or neglect; but to pay all due honor to them: And especially those, to whom you owe honor and subjection on account of the particular relation which they bear to you, as well as on account of their years. For in this case, there is a two-fold obligation lying upon you to regard and honor them; and the neglect hereof will be proportionably criminal.

AND here, in the first place, I would particularly remind you of the honor which you owe to your natural parents, your fathers and mothers; and which is due to them by fuch a double bond and obligation, as was referred to above. It will be highly criminal in you to despise them, to treat them with any kind of mockery or difrespect, tho' you should discover some weaknesses and infirmities, or even vices in them; a supposition which, however, I do not make without reluctance. You would do well to remember the

† Prov. XVI. 31. § 2 Kings II. 23, 24.

" the young ravens of the valley shall pick it out,

" and the young eagles shall cat it." §

THE apostle, speaking to the young, of their duty to their parents, reminds them of that ancient and well-known command, "Honor thy father and mother;" particularly reminding them at the same time, that this is " the first commandment with promise:" referring to the gracious promife implied in the words immediately following—" that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." It is indeed well worthy of observation, that this is the only commandment in the decalogue, to which any promise at all is annexed.

Young men, especially such as are still under the immediate care and government of their parents, are indispensably obliged to pay them, not only an external respect and reverence, but to hearken to their counsels, and to "obey them in the Lord;" i. e. in all things lawful, and agreeable to the Lord's will. And as to those of you, my young brethren, who are not still under the

immediate

immediate eye and government of your parents, but are gone from them, and have families of your own; you will always be under a natural and religious obligation to treat them with great respect, deference and honor: And, let me add, to take care of, and to provide for them in their age, if there should be occasion for it on their part, and ability on yours. Which is certainly no more than a proper return to those, who brought you up with fo much tenderness, cost and care; and to whom, probably, under God, you are chiefly indebted for whatever worldly

possessions and prosperity you enjoy.

BUT you are to honor your other superiors in age and station, as well as your parents; or tho' you have none of the latter. Some of you may have guardians, who are instead of parents to you; and to whom, in divers respects, a similar regard is due from you. Others of you may be fervants, apprentices to tradefmen, merchants, &c. And you are bound to respect and obey them in that relation. Some of you may be fo young, as not yet to have left the schools; but to be "under tutors and governors," and instructors in various branches of useful literature. On which supposition, you are in reason and duty bound to respect and honor them; to hearken to their counsels, to obey them and their orders in things relative to their office: And to do otherwife will be highly displeasing to God. I shall fay nothing here particularly, respecting your duty to religious instructors, the ministers of the gospel, who are over you in the Lord, admonish M 4

you, and watch for your fouls as they that must give an account: Thinking that, after what has been faid relative to persons in other stations, what is due to them, may be fafely referred to your own ingenuity, your unbiassed judgment and consciences. Indeed, it ever appeared to me both a vain and arrogant thing, for the ministers of the gospel to think of "magnifying their office," and gaining efteem, by crying up the dignity of it; and demanding respect and homage, "as the manner of some is:" Especially if, at the fame time, they rather difgrace their office by a behaviour unworthy of it, than honor it themfelves, by a faithful discharge of the important duties of it. And, by what I have read and observed, I believe it very feldom happens that any minister, who magnifies his office only by acting worthy of it, wants that regard which justly belongs to him; except, perhaps, from a few particular persons: Nor has any thing contributed more to bring a reproach upon it, than the vain attempts to magnify it by other means, to the neglect of this.

But I must not omit particularly to remind you of the honor and obedience which you owe to your civil superiors; whether to the king as supereme, or to governors as unto them that are sent by him, or to others cloathed with authority under either. The apostle, in this same epistle to Titus, gives him the following direction:

"Put them in mind," says he, "to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates."†

You are indispensably bound to obey the good and wholsome laws of society, and all magistrates and officers

officers without exception, in the due execution of those laws; and this not for fear of "wrath," at least not only that, "but for conscience sake." For they are the "ministers of God for good;" ordained by him for the "punishment of evildoers, and for a praise to them that do well." To oppose, insult or resist them, in the exercise of a lawful authority, or lightly to speak evil of, and defame them, is an heinous fin? It is, in effect, to speak evil of, and oppose an ordinance of God, of the utmost consequence to human fociety. And the apostle fays, " they that refist, shall receive to themselves damnation." Meaning hereby, that if particular persons rise up in oppofition to the government and laws established where they live, they shall be condemned of God: Not that a nation or people, generally oppreffed and tyrannized over, by the exercise of an exorbitant, illegal power, subversive of the fundamental laws of a kingdom, may not rife up in defence of their laws, of the constitution, of their civil liberties and rights, in opposition to such lawless violence; as some sacerdotal sycophants, and other tools of power have pretended, with equal folly, imprudence and impiety; that they might encourage kings to be arbitrary, unjust and cruel, and reduce subjects to a state of the most abject, miserable flavery. The most virtuous, the bravest and most enlightened spirits of antiquity, of all ages, have ever afferted it to be right, honorable and glorious for a people, by any means to rid themselves of such monsters as common tyrants; even as they would of tygers, wolves, bears and lions

dions: A fentiment, which will never be lost out of the world, so long as any good sense, true re-

ligion and virtue remain in it.

To conclude this branch of my discourse: You will, by no means, deserve the character of being sober-minded, if you allow yourselves in the violation of any of God's commandments respecting the honor, duty and subjection which you owe to your parents, the civil powers, or any of your other superiors, whether in station or years. Whatever young man disobeys these important precepts of religion, he is not only destitute of all christian sobriety, but of all due regard to the light and dictates of nature, to which they are perfectly confonant; and is so far from being a loyal and worthy subject of Christ's kingdom, that he is a difgrace to the civil fociety of which he is a member, and hardly worthy to live in it.

brethren, caution you against the odious, horrid sin of falsebood and lying, as utterly inconsistent with all sobriety of mind. This was one of the sins, for which the Cretians were particularly infamous. The apostle, therefore, reminds Titus of their character in this respect, as given them by one of their own prophets or poets; which he consirms, and gives Titus a direction relative thereto. "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own said, The Cretians are alway liars "—This witness is true: Wherefore rebuke them sharply." † And well, surely, did they, who

who were not only sometimes guilty of this detestable sin, but "alway liars," deserve to be

/barply rebuked.

This vice is found in persons of all ages, and all characters, almost, except good ones. Even some of the Old, if they are not alway liars, yet are fometimes fo: And as they have lived with a lye in their mouths, fo they probably die at last with one in "their right hand." But this feems to be, very particularly, one of the fins of youth. There is no fin, which at once so early and so fully discovers the pravity of the human heart, as lying. And this is the reason why the psalmist, speaking of the wicked, and their early wandering from the paths of virtue, gives this, rather than any other, as an example thereof; faying, somewhat hyperbolically indeed, That they are " estranged from the womb; and go affray as foon as they are born, speaking lies." Many children there are, who grow up in this evil practice; and strengthen, by custom aud habit, the corrupt biass and propenfity of nature: Of whom it may be faid, with particular propriety, that they are " of their " father the devil; for he is a liar, and the father " of it;" and the lust of their father they do.

THERE are many forts of lying and of liars in the world;—political, forensic, medical, mercantile, martial, mechanical, ecclesiastical, &c. &c. A circumstantial description of any one of them, particularly of the first and the last mentioned, would fill many volumes. But I must content myself with only observing in general, That under

under this head of lying, comes all wilful deception of others by words, to their prejudice, or to the injury of any person or persons whatfoever; whether in the way of defamation or flattery, of bearing witness, or of common narration, of trade and commerce, of political wrangling, of juridical debate, of empirical juggling, of ecclesiastic imposture, of trade and commerce; whether with reference to the business and concerns of life, ordinary or extraordinary; whether relative to this world, or to that which is to come. Whosoever wilfully deceives another in either of these ways, with any view to benefit himself, or to hurt and injure any other person, is-a LIAR. Consider then, how many persons of this infamous character there are in this wicked, false world; and how capacious a "lake" must that be, in which it is said, "ALL liars shall have their part." †

FALSEHOOD is a principal prop of the kingdom of darkness and of satan; of iniquity, superstition and idolatry, of all vice and unrighteousness amongst men; the grand engine which the devil works, partly with his own skilful hand, and partly by those of his children, in order to accommplish his malicious and accursed designs, to subvert all order, to confound all right and justice, and to destroy mankind. For it is by "deceiving the nations," that he ruins them, and supports his kingdom. Truth, on the other hand, is the foundation of God's kingdom, consisting in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Christ therefore "came "into the world, to bear witness to the truth." This is the grand support of religion, order, justice and human society; neither of which can subsist without truth. Lying is therefore one of the greatest sins; and loving and speaking the truth, one of the most necessary, the most important virtues. This is a material and effential branch of christian sobriety. They are, accordingly, sometimes joined together in scripture, as being closely connected: As when the apostle says, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but " speak forth the words of truth and soberness." In which passage, by the way, truth and sobriety fland in opposition, not merely to known, wilful falsehood; but also to enthusiastic error and delusion, superstition and religious madness. "I am "not mad-but," &c. This is an observation. of which I shall have occasion to make some farther use, before I close the present discourse.

Lying is a fin, so frequently and solemnly forbidden in the holy scriptures; and the speaking of truth is so often and positively enjoined therein, that it is not necessary to refer you to any particular passages to this purpose. You can have no pretence to sobriety, unless you abstain from, and abhor lying, as one of the most pernicious, execrable vices; a vice which is destructive of the whole religious and moral character, and inconsistent, in its very nature, with every good and amiable quality, except in appearance only. You are then, to speak truth at all times, and with all persons; to be sincere and open, frank and ingenuous in all your intercourse

with the world: So as to avoid the very appearance, and much more the reality, of this shameful and abominable sin of lying; the very name of which is odious, and the imputation of which is usually and justly considered as the highest reproach, the greatest affront that one person can well offer to another.

Those who have had a good, or even tolerable education, are almost shocked at the very found of the word lye: At least, they generally affect to be so, even while, perhaps, some of them have no religion or virtue, and often commit the fin itself; disguising, as well as they can, the horror and infamy of it under some softer name, thro' an hypocritical fort of delicacy. But things should be called by their proper A lye does not cease to be so, and become an innocent thing, by being covered with a good name, any more than a ravening wolf is transformed into an harmless animal, by "coming to us in sheep's cloathing." And let me add, tho' it may perhaps be a paradox to some, That a great lye does not become absolutely no lye, by being told by a great man, or a grave one, or a young one of a genteel education: No; not even tho' the first punishes lying in little finners, and the fecond preaches against it in the laiety, while the third, affects to be thunderstruck, as it were, with the very mention of it!-It were well if people as generally and fincerely abhorred this servile, fordid, execrable vice, as they dislike the imputation, and dread to lye under the scandal of it. But, alas! the same royal royal psalmist, who observes that "men of low degree are vanity," observes also, that even "men of high degree are a lye." All people in general, and particularly those that are well educated, shew a just notion of the foul, hateful and infamous nature of this fin, by their fo highly refenting the charge of lying: And if, notwithstanding this, they practife it in any shape or form, their just conceptions of its foulness, will ferve only to increase their own infamy, guilt and punishment. Let those of you therefore, my young brethren, that have delicate ears, or nice notions of honor, have true, fincere and upright hearts also; and mouths undefiled with lying. In the language of the psalmist, "keep your tongues from evil, and your lips from speaking guile—For lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." They are also an abomination to every good man; to every person of any religion, virtue, or real honor.

X. LET me next caution you against rash and immoderate anger, furious refentment and a vindictive spirit, as contrary to christian sobriety of mind. The passions of young men are generally strong, impetuous, and hard to be kept within due bounds. This is true, in particular, of those passions which are distinguished by the name of the irafcible, or the angry and wrathful ones. They are often awakened in the breasts of the young, with very little, or no just provocation. Or, if there is any warrantable ground for them; yet they are often excessive in degree; tumultuous, violent and outrageous; breaking forth like savage beasts from their dens and caves, seeking to destroy and to devour; aiming at little or nothing short of the utter ruin of the person who roused them up. Hence frequent quarrels and sightings, and sometimes blood-shed and murder. Anger, when undirected, uncontrouled by reason, is only another name for sury and frenzy, madness and distraction; in the paroxisms of which, even tho' but short, people often do things that give them cause for repentance as long as they live; and indeed, not feldom, what brings them to an untimely end.

SUFFERING these passions to reign in, and to be masters over you, is plainly incompatible with fobriety of mind, unless madness and fobriety are confistent with each other. every fober mind, reason is predominant; keeping all the passions, and particularly anger and resentment, under subjection, or within its proper bounds. Any man, whether young or old, who is often as it were drunk with anger and revenge, is as far from being a fober one, as if he were as often intoxicated with strong drink. Nay, the former is, of the two, rather more criminal than the latter; there being nothing so directly contrary to that love or charity, which is the bond of perfectness, the spirit of the gospel, and the fulfilling of the law, as a wrathful, revengeful and implacable spirit. If one of them does, in a fort, make fools and beafts

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beasts of men, the other, I had almost said, makes them devils.

The angry passions are as natural to mankind as any other: They are born, and also grow up with us to a criminal excess, unless prevented by a religious education, and the grace of God. This is the true meaning of an expression in one of St. Paul's epistles, often perverted to an unscriptural and horrid, if not blasphemous sense—" Among whom we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our slesh, fulfilling the desires of the slesh, and of the mind; and were by nature children of wrath, even as others." In

+ Eph. II 3. N. B. TEKNA PHUSEI ORGEES, ("by nature children of wrath") according to the Greek idiom, fignifies children naturally of a wrathful temper, or angry disposition; the subjects of wrath consider'd as a passion inherent in, and natural to them : Not the objects of God's anger, as if they were odious to him, or under his wrath, even from their birth. Neither does TEKNA, [children] here, any more intend infants just born, than the same word means infants in almost numberless other places. Thus in this same Epistle, Ch. 5. 1. "Be ye followers of God as dear children."-And ch. 6. 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord"-So I John 3. 10. " In this the children of God are manifest,"-And Rom. 8. 17. If children, then heirs, heirs of God," &c. In the language of scripture adult, and even aged persons, are all styled children. Nor is there any reason for understanding infants hereby, in this famous text. It was indeed before allowed that anger, or wrath, is a passion that is natural to mankind, and born with us as our other passions are. And if it is indulged afterwards to excess, it doubtless becomes criminal in the fight of God. This is the utmost that can be made of this place. To suppole the meaning of it is, that even infants, are objects of God's wrath, is to put a sense upon it which the Greek will

conformity whereto, the same apostle, in his Epistle to Titus, describes his own temper before his conversion, [i. e. his temper "by nature"] and that of others, in the following words: "We ourselves also were sometimes "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, "hateful and hating one another." This is a temper and practice, directly the reverse of that which, in the preceding words, he exhorts Titus to inculcate upon the Cretians; viz. "to obey magistrates, to be ready to e-"very good [charitable] work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, "shewing all meekness unto all men."

The fins of rash anger, and excessive refertment, are particularly forbidden in the holy scriptures, as contrary to true wisdom, virtue, and that self-government, in which sobriety of mind very essentially consists. They are sometimes represented as sure signs and marks of folly. "The fool rageth and

not well admit: And it is besides, a most irrational, unferiptural interpretation—What ideas must those have of the justice, goodness and mercy of God, who imagine that infants just born, are the objects of his wrath? yea, that many of them, without actual sinning, are eternally damned! I seriously declare that I would not trust my person, or property, with those who have such conceptions of the

divine justice and goodness, if I did not charitably hope, that many of them think themselves bound in duty to be much juster and better than they represent their God!

" is confident," fays Solomon: " He that is " foon angry dealeth foolishly. ‡" And again: " Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry; for " anger resteth in the bosom of fools." On the other hand, the Wife Man speaks of suppressing wrath, and forgiving injuries, as a person's wisdom and glory: "He that is " flow to anger is better than the mighty; " and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that " taketh a city.*" " The discretion of a man " deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to " pass over a transgression. †" And once more: " He that is flow to anger, is of great under-" standing: but he that is hasty of spirit, ex-" alteth folly.*" There is a dignity and glory in suppressing refentment, and in being of a placable, forgiving temper, which a little, dark and groveling mind has no conception of; but, on the contrary, looks upon it as mean, base and dishonourable.

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THE apostle Paul, allowing the lawfulness of anger in some cases, cautions us against the excesses of it, in a manner which supposes unreasonable anger to be a peculiarly diabolical passion: "Be ye angry, and sin not, says he; let not the sun go down upon your wrath; neither give place to the devil. †" Our blessed Saviour, who was truly meek and lowly in heart, assures us, "that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, N 2 "shall

[†] Prov. xiv. 16, 17. | Eccl. vii. 9. * Prov. xvi. 32. † Ch. xix. 11. * Chap. xiv. 29. † Eph. iv. 26, 27.

" shall be in danger of the judgment." He expressly makes the forgiving of injuries, one condition of our being forgiven of God; faying, " If ye forgive men their trespasses, your " heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you. " Let me remind you of another passage of scripture, which so fully expresses your duty, both negatively and politively, as to the point in hand, that it will hardly be necessary to add any thing farther upon it-" Recompense to no man evil for evil-If it be possible, as " much as lieth in you, live peaceably with " all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not your-" felves, but rather give place unto wrath. " [i. e. to the righteous judgment of God.] " For it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will " repay, faith the Lord. Therefore if thine " enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give " him drink. For in fo doing thou shalt heap " coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome " of evil, but overcome evil with good. " Thus you fee, how an angry and wrathful, a malicious and revengeful temper of mind, stands in direct opposition to that charity and meekness, that peaceableness and universal good-will, which is at once fo eminently the characteristic of the christian religion, and so little cultivated by many of its professors: Yea, which a false and hypocritical zeal, not according to knowledge, often facrifices merely

ly for the fake of promoting, by any means, right or wrong, whatever has, in particular countries, obtained the fascinating name of orthodoxy; tho', perhaps, the very dregs of antichristian error and herefy; or, at best, some minute and doubtful speculations of fanciful men mif-spending their leisure hours. But you, my beloved young brethren, will put on a meek, charitable and friendly dispofition towards all men; never indulging yourselves in that wrath, which worketh not the righteousness of God; and least of all, when religion, holy and heaven-born religion, is the thing in question. In a word, you will remember the admonition of the apostle James, with which I close this head of discourse: " If ye have bitter envying and strife in your " hearts, glory not, and lie not against the " truth. This wisdom descendeth not from " above, but is earthly, fenfual, devilish. For " where envying and strife is, there is confu-" fion, and every evil work. But the wif-" dom that is from above, is first pure, then " peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full " of mercy and good fruits, without partia-" lity, and without hypocrify: And the fruit " of righteousness is sown in peace of them " that make peace. " † - Envy being mentioned in this passage, as a great sin, and one principal fource of confusion and evil works; I may from hence take occasion, in the next place, to speak briefly of it. Wherefore, XI. AN

XI. An envious temper is inconfistent with true fobriety of mind. This is an uneafy passion that is well known, arising from obferving the real or supposed felicity of others, in fome one or more respects, on a comparifon of our own condition with theirs; being a particular modification of inordinate felflove, or a natural refult thereof. For, in propriety of language, we envy nothing to others, but what we fecretly covet ourselves; wishing that we, instead of they, had the possession and enjoyment of it; whether it be riches, power, beauty, wit, learning, or any thing elfe. So that envy is a criminal impotence of mind, standing in opposition to reasonable self-love, and contentment with our own condition, and to that charity which delighteth in the felicity of others. vious man thinks that he has too little, and the object of his envy too much, of what he confiders as good and defireable in its nature. From hence refults that peculiar feeling or fentiment, expressed by the term envy; at once irrational and criminal; nor less tormenting to the mind subject thereto, than the wracks of the cruelest tyrants are to the bodies of their slaves. ‡ Yea, it drinks up the spirits, and consumeth the very flesh, bones and marrow. " A found heart is the life of the flesh, " says Solomon; " but envy is the rottenness of the bones.

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^{1.} Invidus alterius macrescit rebus opimis: Invidia Siculi non invenere tyranni Majus tormentum ——

No person is qualified to live easily and happily in this world, that is of an envious disposition; much less is he prepared for a better. In any world you must needs be miferable, unless you conquer this evil passion; which yet is, perhaps, one of the hardest and last that is subdued. It is not without great difficulty that even wife and good men wholly suppress the workings of it in their breasts; especially when they observe foolish and wicked men in great outward dignity, honor and prosperity. The psalmist (Asaph) speaks of this as a fore trial to himself. "As " for me," fays he, " my feet were almost " go ne; my steps had well-nigh slipped: For " I was envious at the foolish, when I saw " the prosperity of the wicked.—Their eyes " stand out with fatness, they have more " than heart can wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak lostily. They set their mouth " against the heavens; and their tongue " walketh thro' the earth." † This is a temper which you must carefully guard against; and particularly, take heed that you do not indulge it with respect to bad men. Here the chief danger lies. You may without pain, possibly with pleasure, see wise and good men prosper in the world; and yet be highly criminal in repining at feeing those that are of a contrary character, wallowing in riches and pleafures, or " fet in great dig-N 4

† See Plalm LXXIII. 2,-14.

nity;" thinking this is rather an honest indignation against vice, than any sin in you. But you are mistaken if you think so. It is owing, either to your not duly considering the providence of God, which over-rules all things, or to your having too high an esteem yourselves for those earthly things, which you envy to bad men; or rather to both.

IF you would be truly wife, or foberminded, you must bear without envy, to see others excel you even in things that are good and praife-worthy; in learning, wisdom and virtue; you must love and esteem them the more for it, and endeavour, as far as may be, to imitate them. Much less ought you to be vexed, and to murmur, if you fee others richer, and more prosperous in the world than yourselves; more regarded and esteemed; if they live in more gaiety, affluence and splendor, than it is in your power to do; or it their defigns meet with fuccess, while your's are croffed and frustrated. Such things as thefe, my young brethren, you must learn to bear, if you would be wife and virtuous, or live happily. Let me add, that if those persons that are richer, more esteemed, and more highly exalted in the world than you, are also wifer and better, as may possibly be the case; certainly you ought to rejoice with them in their prosperity, in the bleffings of divine providence bestowed upon them, instead of being envious at them; according to the apostolic injunction, "Rejoice with them

that do rejoice." But if they are foolish and wicked, while you are wife and virtuous, there is still the less reason why you should envy them any outward prosperity. This were as if an honest man should envy to the thief, robber or murderer, the rich velvet, the fashionable wig, and laced cloaths, in which he fees him carted to Tyburn! To cure you of envying the foolish and wicked, only do as Afaph did—Enter into the "fanctuary " of God, and understand their end. Surely " thou didst fet them in slippery places: thou " castedst them down to destruction. " are they brought down to defolation as in " a moment !* " This is the most effectual preservative against that common weakness, that criminal impotence of mind, envy; as well as a fovereign remedy for fo fad a diforder, in those upon whom it has already seized, whether old or young. I shall therefore difmiss this particular with the counsel and prefcription of the royal pfalmist. " Fret not " thyself because of evil doers; neither be " thou envious against the workers of ini-" quity. For they shall soon be cut down " like the grass, and wither as the green " herb.—Commit thy way unto the Lord; " trust also in him.-Rest in the Lord, and " wait patiently for him. Fret not thyself " because of him that prospereth in his way, " because of the man who bringeth evil de-" vices to pass. Cease from anger, and for-

^{*} Pfalm lxxiii. 17-

"Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not

" be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his

" place, and it shall not be. " *

XII. ALL excessive indulgence of your fenfual appetites in eating and drinking, is directly repugnant to sobriety. We often speak of fobriety, more especially in contraditinction to the shameful vices of intemperance; of which these two are not the least brutal +. They are probably more frequently the vices of youngmen, than of the old, tho' far from being peculiar to them. But be that as it may; it is certain they are great, dishonourable and pernicious vices, by whomfoever they are practised. They are destructive at once to the health of body and mind; and are great occasions of consuming both the time and the fubstance. They indispose people for serving either God or their generation. They are fruitful of mischief, not only to those that are guilty of them, but to fociety; and more particularly to their own families, if any they have. THESE

* Pfal. xxxvii. 1-10.

The apostle speaks of the several vices of intemperance, under the terms—" pollutions of the world;" and compares those persons who return to, after having forsaken them, to a "dog returning to his vomit," and a "fow, to her wallowing in the mire." [2 Pet. ii. 20, 22] The courtly Horace did not think the same images too gross or indelicate, in speaking of the same vices under the sable of the Circaan cup—and this with express reference to a King, Ulysses—

THESE vices are very frequently and feverely censured in scripture, under the wellknown terms, drunkenness and gluttony. Let me remind you of some of the many scriptural warnings against these shameful and ruinous excesses. " Hear thou, my Son," fays Solomon, " and be wife, and guide thine " heart in the way. Be not amongst wine-" bibbers; amongst riotous eaters of flesh. " For the drunkard and the glutton shall " furely come to poverty; and drowfinefs " shall cloath a man with rags." # And again in the same chapter: " Who hath wo? " who hath forrow? who hath contentions? " who hath babbling? who hath wounds " without cause? who hath redness of eyes? " They that tarry long at the wine-Look " not thou upon the wine when it is red. " when it giveth his color in the cup, when " it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth " like a ferpent, and stingeth like an adder." Amongst divers other woes and curses, denounced against several forts of sinners, I Isai. ch. V.] this is one: " Wo unto them that " rife up early in the morning, that they may " follow strong drink; that continue until " night, till wine inflame them. And the " harp and viol, the tabret and pipe, and " wine are in their feasts: But they regard " not the work of the Lord, neither consider " the operation of his hand."

You would do well also to consider our Saviour's well-known parable t of the foolish young man, who wafted his substance with riotous living; and the mifery and dishonor to which he was reduced, when he became the keeper and feeder of fwine for another. and would fain have filled himfelf with their busks, after he had spent all he had in luxury and excess; but was not permitted to do even Tho' the ultimate defign of this part of the parable, is to represent the misery and shame to which all wicked men in general bring themselves by forfaking God, and the house of their heavenly Father, where there is " bread enough and to spare "--true and abundant felicity; yet it may be usefully improved in the literal fense, as an example to the young, of the fad effects of riot, luxury and intemperance; and a folemn lesson or warning to them, to beware of those vices in particular. But our Saviour gives you a more direct admonition with reference to thefe fins: "Take heed to your felves," fays he, " lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with furfciting and drunkenness-"and fo that day come upon you unawares."* -" Lest at any time" - There are times of peculiar temptation to these vices; particularly feafons of rejoicing, whether public, or more private. And there are perfons who, tho' not habitually given to intemperance, are yet fometimes shamefully overtaken on fuch

[‡] Luke xxv. * Luke xx. 34.

fuch occasions. It will, therefore, be your wisdom and duty, to be particularly upon

your guard at all fuch feafons.

THE apostle Paul speaks of some persons. " whose God is their belly, and whose glory " is their shame." This is peculiarly applicable to the drunkard and the glutton; especially to those who even make their boasts, what mighty feats they have done in eating and drinking; what heroes they are at the table; and how many men of might, by means of their superior prowess, they have feen fallen as dead under it. Such shameful and shameless men there are in the world; and fome of them perhaps, at the fame time, very zealous for the religious obfervation of Chrismas, or of Thanksgiving-days; thinking those who difregard them, very impious, wicked men!—The same apostle admonishes you and all, who are blessed with the light of the gospel, to abstain from all fuch works of heathenish darkness and ignorance as these; saying, "Let us cast off the " works of darkness, and let us put on the " armour of light. Let us walk honestly as " in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, " not in chambering and wantonness, not in " strife and envying. But put ye on the " Lord Jesus Christ; and make no provision " for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Now, it is evident that he is void of christain sobriety, who addicts himself to either of these vices. For what a solecism would it be,

to speak of a religious, sober drunkard or glutton! If you are truly fober and virtuous, you will not allow yourfelves in an over delicate and luxurious way of living; much less in fuch grosly criminal excesses as these. One design of our Saviour's parable of Lazarus, and the rich man who was "cloath-" ed in fine linen, and fared fumptuously eve-" ry day," I feems to have been, to reprove fuch a way of life as dangerous, and contrary to the spirit of religion; even tho' people should abstain from all gross acts of intemperance. And it is, unquestionably, inconsistent with christian sobriety, to make it as it were a business to pamper the body, and to live a delicate, luxurious life; tho' a person should never be chargeable with gluttony or drunkenness. If this is what is uppermost in a man's thoughts and concerns, instead of the cultivating his mind, and pleafing God, he does, without doubt, " make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof," in the sense wherein it is forbidden by the apostle; and walks after the flesh, not after the spirit.

To conclude this head of discourse: If you are sober-minded, you will make the pleasing of God your end, your habitual endeavour; and will of consequence, restrain your natural appetites within the bounds of such a temperance, as is best adapted to health, strength, and activity; such a moderation, as will most contribute to the vigor both of body and mind;

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mind; and thereby fit you for discharging the various duties of life and godliness, with spirit and alertness: Instead of having your bodies and senses stupisted, and even your diviner part benumbed, borne down and carnalized, they an excessive load of meat and drink; at once to your own shame, and to the scandalous abuse of the bounties of providence, given to be received only with temperance and thanksgiving, by them that know the truth. From these, One may naturally proceed to speak of some other lusts of the stesh, which are to be avoided as contrary to sobriety. Accordingly let me caution you, in the next place,

XIII. AGAINST all those vices which, in the language of scripture, are comprehended under the terms uncleanness, and the lust of uncleanness. The several vices included in these general terms, are emphatically the vices of youth. And they are accordingly suppoposed to be the sins primarily intended by the apostle Paul. in one of his epistles, by youthful lusts *— "Flee also youthful lusts," says he: i. e. all the vices of lasciviousness and incontinence, or those which are opposed to chastity.

UNCLEANNESS is a fin of a very heinous nature, directly opposite to christian sobriety, and of pernicious consequence to society, as well

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well as to them that are enflaved to it. There are not indeed wanting, old finners and fervants of fatan, who transgress in this way, to their own infamy; and often, to the ruin of their estates, families, health, bodies and fouls at But yet, as was intimated before, this is a fin which reigns more generally amongst the young; who therefore need to be very particularly warned against it. The holy scriptures abound with prohibitions, and very fevere censures of it. So that there will be scarce need of my doing any thing more upon this head, than to remind you of some of the many passages of scripture relative hereto; to the folly and mifery of this vice, and the heavy curses of God denounced against those who are guilty of it.

You cannot be ignorant that one of the ten commandments, in which the moral law is epitomized, or contained in brief, relates particularly to this fin—" Thou shalt not commit adultery." And as this vice, in the various evil forms of it, frequently accompanies intemperance in other respects, yea, is often the effect thereof; we find it mentioned and censured together with them—" I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings. For they shall eat, and not have enough; they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase; because they have left off to take heed to the Lord. Whoredom, and wine, and new wine take away the heart."!

So again:-"When I fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and affembled themfelves by troops to the harlots houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: Every one neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my foul be avenged on fuch a nation as this!" †

THERE are many passages in the Proverbs of Solomon, which particularly fet forth the folly, dishonor, and ruinous effects of this vice: And, furely, no person was more capable of giving good counsel to young men in this respect than he-" My fon," fays he, "attend unto my wifdom, and bow thine ear to my understanding-For the lips of a strange woman [i. e. an harlot] drop as an hony-comb, and her mouth is smoother than oil: but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on hell-Remove thy way from her, and come not nigh the door of her house; lest thou give thine honor unto others, and thy years unto the cruel: Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth, and thy labors be in the house of strangers; and thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are confumed." And again, towards the end of the same chapter—" Rejoice with the WIFE of thy youth-And why wilt thou, my fon, be ravisht with a strange woman? -For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings." the following chapter, speaking still of the strange woman, or harlot, the wife man fays, "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart, neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of an whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread; and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom. and his cloaths not be burnt?"-He speaks a little after of those who are addicted to this vice, as destitute of understanding-" Whoso committeth adultery with a woman, lacketh understanding; he that doeth it, destroyeth his own foul. A wound and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away." ‡

THE next chapter is chiefly taken up with an account of the leud woman, or harlot, and the deceitful, wicked arts, which she practises too fuccessfully on young men void of understanding and experience. After a very circumstantial description of her guileful, serpentine managements and enticements, the wife man proceeds to relate the miferable end of the foolish unhappy young one; and to fet him up for a warning to future ages. The account ends thus: "With her much fair speech she caused him to yield; with the flattering of her lips she forced him. He goeth after her straitway," (be pleased to take particular notice of what follows-) " as an ox goeth to the flaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks; till a dart strike thro' his liver, as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her

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ways; go not after her paths. For she hath cast

down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death."

To these solemn counsels and warnings out of the old testament, let me subjoin two or three from the new-" Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupifcence—For which things fake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." And again: "The Lord knoweth how-to referve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished; but CHIEFLY them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness"—" "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy."* -"Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid!—He that committeth fornication, finneth against his own body."§

THERE are divers kinds of leudness and impurity, which belong to this head, besides adultery and fornication in the common gross sense. We read in scripture of "committing adultery in the heart;" and of some persons who have "eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin." All obscene, lascivious or unchaste words, are also criminal: To which the apostle refers, when he says, "Fornication, and all uncleanness, let it not be once named among you, as

O 2 becometh † Prov. Ch. VII. ‡ Col. III. 5, &c. || 2 Pet. Ch. II. 9, 10. * 1 Cor. III. 16, 17. § Chap. VI. 15, &c. becometh saints: Neither filthiness, nor soolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient." There are some still more unnatural, shameful and brutal sins, which belong to this head. For, as the apostle observes, it is "even a shame to speak of those things which are done of some in secret." I shall therefore spare at once your modesty and my own, in not being more particular—

Now, my young brethren, if you are foberminded, you will keep yourselves pure from all these abominations; against which the wrath of God is so plainly revealed from heaven. cularly, you will avoid all forbidden intercourse with leud, prostitute and infamous women; of whom, it is faid, there are many amongst us. know not; but wherever they are, they may justly be accounted the difgrace, not only of their own fex, but of human nature; the pefts of fociety; the contempt and abhorrence of all good men; the daughters of fatan, and the execration of the Almighty. And will you give your substance, your strength, your honor, to fuch infamous wretches as these; who thirst for your wealth, who lay wait for the precious life, and whose doors are the gates of hell! Would you dishonour the members of Christ?-would you defile the temple of God, which is holy, with fuch filthy and detestable, tho' probably painted and gilded idols!—Or, as to any of that fex, who are yet undebauched, would you be "first in the transgression?" Would, or could you, if you tho't of the matter, be guilty of fo dishonourable, so base, so cruel a thing, as to entice

tice an innocent, virtuous young woman to forfeit her virtue and honor?—at best to her shame
and grief all her days; and, not improbably, to
the utter loss of her reputation, and engaging
her in such a course of life, as will ruin her both
soul and body! O base, horrid, insamous deed!
And if the person thus ensnared and ruined by
you, should be one that had any regard for you;
this would but increase the blackness and horror
of the crime, by adding ingratitude to it!

THE infinitely wife and beneficent Author of nature, and of all the focial passions, affections and instincts in mankind, has, by his express laws and institutions, made provision for the regular, virtuous and honourable gratification of them. And, in one very material instance, relative to the point in hand, the following passages of scripture will shew you at once, both what that course of life is, which He has ordained, and the great guilt and danger of deviating from it: I mean those very grave and sober words of the apostle Paul-" To avoid fornication, let EVERY man have his own wife, and EVERY woman her own husband." †- " Marriage is HONOURABLE in ALL, and the bed undefiled: But whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." 1 2

O 3 XIV. LET

Among the numerous bad effects of pride and luxury in life, the prevention of MARRIAGE is not the leaft. There are many men in the world, who, tho' in circumstances to support a family comfortably and decently, will not comply with the order of God and nature, because they are not in a capacity to live in such affluence and splendor as they defire;

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XIV. LET me remind you, in the next place, that all fraud and injustice are absolutely inconfishent

fuch as their fathers live, or lived in; or fuch as many of their acquaintance live in: That is, in other words, because they have not much more of the world than they need. And the young, of the other amiable fex, having been brought up in a delicate, fumptuous way, will not marry, perhaps, till they have the offer of fuch matches, that they can immediately be maintained near, if not quite, in as genteel and grand a manner as that, in which they were brought up in their fathers houses; or that in which they see some of their cotemporaries live. These are facts, as to many persons of both fexes. But how irrational is it, that young gentlemen and ladies should expect to begin the world with as much equipage and grandeur, or to live at first in as sumptuous a manner as their parents could well do at last, after having, by the bleffing of God on many years industry, acquired riches? Can any expect that their parents should either make away with themselves, or give up all to them while they live? One of these would be necessary in order to their living in the like affluence. Nor would even this fuffice, except in a few cases. For most parents have more than one, two or three children; many have fix, eight, ten, or more, to inherit their estates. So that giving up all to be divided amongst them, would not put them into such circumstances, as to enable them to live in the fame manner in which they were brought up. Which, or fomething very near it, is what many feem to infift on, as the condition of their entering into the marriage state. Vain and extravagant imagination indeed! It is to expect what is naturally impossible. And the consequence hereof is, that many persons live all their days, and more still, much the greater and better part of them, in an unnatural state, contrary to the express ordi-And many of the men who live thus, betake nance of God. themselves to such positively vicious courses, (it is needless to fay in what respects) as are at once dishonourable to themsclves, ruinous to many persons of the other sex, of low condition, and as render both, the nufances and difgrace of fociety.

Besides: the increase of mankind is hereby prevented. For as to those who live continently all their days in a single state, (whether many or few) they are the occasion of no addition to the numbers of society: They are "written childless;" and do not leave any to supply even their own places, when they are taken off the stage. And as to those who live other-

fistent with sobriety. Certainly, a dishonest, injurious person cannot be a sober One, in the fense of scripture; wherein every species of dishonesty, unrighteousness and fraud, is so frequently and folemnly forbidden. "What! " know ye not that the unrighteous shall not "inherit the kingdom of God?"-

wife, in a promiscuous or lawless concubinage; the experience of all ages has verified one part of the curse denounced against such persons, by the God of nature and order, viz. "They shall commit whoredom, but they shall not increase; " because they have left off to take heed to the Lord." [Hos. iv. 10.] That is, they shall not increase in any fort of proportion to those who observe the divine institution of marriage. So that, instead of leaving behind them many fons and daughters honourably born, for the support, increase and ornament of fociety, they furnish it only with a few b-st-rds; who are also commonly brought up in such a way, unhappy persons! as gives themselves, their guilty parents and the commonwealth, cause rather to wish they had never been, than the contrary! There are, indeed, some persons born under these unhappy circumstances, who prove real ornaments and blesfings to fociety: Nor ought any of them to be despised merely on account of their having had fuch profligate parents.

These are a few of the many civil and political bad consequences of celibacy; one principal occasion of which in this country, is that " pride of life, which is not of the Father, but of the world:"--- A kind of pride, which will not permit people to marry, unless they have much more than nature requires; and can live, not only comfortably, but in fplendor, make a figure in the world, and "fare fumptuously every day:"---A kind of pride, which feems to be growing upon us instead of abating, and threatens the worst of evils, temporal and eternal. It is partly owing to this, that not a few persons are arrived at fuch effrontery and impiety in their celibate, criminal way of life, as even to defame the original institution of Heaven, and that state which the Spirit of God has fince declared honourable in all. This is one of the furest evidences of a grofly depraved mind. And I cannot but add, that that pride of life, which is one principal means of preventing marriage, is of much worse consequence in a young country, thin of inhabitants, than in an old one, already nearly, or perhaps fully peopled.

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Some of you, my young brethren, are yet in your minority, under the immediate care and government of your parents, or of guardians. Others of you may be servants or apprentices. Now, you may not, in any respect, wrong or defraud either your parents, your guardians, or your masters, any more than another person, by taking any thing to your own use, which belongs to them: I mean, without their express permission, or their known general allowance and approbation. One might here apply, not improperly, the words of the apostle, tho' written originally with another view-" The heir as "long as he is a child, differeth nothing from " a servant, tho' he be lord of all; but is under " tutors and governors, until the time appointed " of the father." † Some children and heirs may, perhaps, imagine that it is no crime for them clandestinely to take and use what belongs to their parents; but this is a great mistake. They have no right, no more than a servant has, to any thing besides what is given to, or allowed them: And it will be highly criminal in you to take, at your own difcretion, any thing that is your parents. Neither may fons, fervants or apprentices be, in any respect, unfaithful to the trust reposed in them respectively. They are obliged to be punctually honest, upright and diligent in whatever is confided to their care, and in whatever they are employed by their parents or masters; faithfully regarding their orders and interest, as they will answer it to God.

I HARDLY need to add, after this, that you are all in general, both those that are minors, and those that are of age to act for yourselves, to be strictly just and upright in all your dealings and intercourse with others; doing to them "whatever you would that they should do to you." For this is not only the law, the prophets, and the gospel of Christ; but the dictate of nature; and found, almost in the same words, in some of the heathen moralists. So that all injustice, iniquity and fraud towards man, of every kind and degree, is repugnant to the light of nature, as well as to christian fobriety, and the strict morals of the gospel. I may therefore difmiss the present head, with this brief mention of it; only referring you to the holy scriptures, and to your own consciences, which will at once confent to every thing enjoined therein, relative to justice betwixt man and man.— I proceed therefore to observe, in the next place,

XV. THAT an avaritious, covetous and worldly disposition, or the immoderate desire and love of riches, is also repugnant to sobriety. "He that maketh haste to be rich," says Solomon, "shall not be innocent."—And, "they that will be rich," says the apostle Paul, "fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves thro' with many sorrows." And our

bleffed

bleffed Saviour has faid, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth"-"Take heed and beware of covetousness." He speaks of a strong attachment to the world, as absolutely inconfistent with true religion; saying, "No man can " ferve two masters; for either he will hate the " one and love the other; or elfe he will hold " to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot

" ferve God and mammon."

COVETOUSNESS is indeed commonly and justly accounted the vice rather of old age, than of youth. However, instances of it even in the latter, are not fo rare and extraordinary, as to render a caution of this nature superfluous or inexpedient in a discourse to young men. The apostle John, to be sure, did not think such admonitions needless for them. For it is more particularly and directly to young men, that he addresses himself thus in his first epistle-"I have " written unto you, young men-Love not the " world, neither the things that are in the world. " If any man love the world, the love of the "Father is not in him-And the world passeth " away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth " the will of God, abideth forever."

As I just now intimated to you, there are some examples of a covetous, worldly temper even in young men: And there is one melancholly instance hereof recorded in the new testament. The story is related by three of the evangelists, † without any considerable variation; and it is particularly worthy of your ferious attention. This unhappy young man came to our

Saviour

⁺ Mat. Ch. XIX. Mark Ch. X. and Luke Ch. XVIII.

Saviour with an apparent, and doubtless some real concern, about the falvation of his foul; faying, "Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life?" By what follows, it appears that he was free from all groß and scandalous vices, in the usual sense of these terms. And one of the evangelists says, that " Jefus beholding him, loved him." However, our Lord knowing at the same time, that the love of this world reigned in his heart; perceiving also, that he had far too high an opinion of his own virtues and righteousness; and being willing to prove him, and shew him to himself, said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: And come and follow me." But the manner in which he received this counsel and admonition, and his conduct thereon, as related in the next verse, shews that even this apparently ferious young man, who was, in some respects, beloved by our Lord, still preferred a present treasure on earth, to a future one in heaven, that faileth not. For it is faid, "But when the young man heard that faying, he went away forrowful; for he had great possessions." From whence our Saviour took occasion to admonish all that were present, concerning the deceitfulness of riches, the danger attending them, and the fatal consequences of a worldly mind; faying, "Verily, I fay unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." Or, as it is expressed in another evangelist, "How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God!" Now

Now, if you are truly wife, you will not follow the example of this unhappy young man; but consider it as left upon record for your warning: And not fuffer the love of gold that perisheth, to reign in your hearts, instead of the love of Christ and of God, and of the true riches;-that far more excellent, enduring substance and treasure in the heavens, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break thro' nor steal." The inordinate love of riches is absolutely inconfiftent with christian sobriety. There is hardly any furer evidence of a fordid and infane mind than this: So far is it from being compatible

with a truly fober one.

IT is not the design of these scriptural counfels and warnings respecting riches, that you should have absolutely no regard for them; much less, that you should wholly neglect all worldly affairs, business and commerce, under a pretence of being heavenly-minded: A notion which some lazy people, and dreaming enthusiasts have espoused; thinking to be subsisted in idleness by the labor and alms of others. is the gift of God, and considered in scripture as one of those worldly bleffings, for which men ought to be thankful to the Father of lights. is therefore, tho' a trial, yet a real good; and not to be absolutely despised. In the possession of a wife and good man, it may contribute not only to the comfort of his own life; but enable him to do much good in the world in divers ways, particularly in the honourable capacity of God's almoner

almoner to the poor: While fools, or wicked men are often the more unhappy themselves, and do hurt to others, by means of those riches which they abuse. Solomon recommends an honest industry, as the natural and appointed means of providing a comfortable livelihood; faying, "Go to the ant, thou fluggard; consider her ways, and be wife: Which having no guide, overfeer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the fummer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." The apostle Paul says, as from the Lord, that " if any will not work, neither should they eat." There is much more to the same purpose in the new testament: And it would be a great perversion of our Saviour's words--" Labor not for the meat that perisheth;"-" Take no thought for the morrow;"—and fuch-like admonitions, to understand them as prohibiting that prudent care and diligence, in order to provide for ourselves, and "that we may have to give to him that needeth," which are positively enjoined in many other parts of scripture.

THE true sense of scripture upon this head, is in general this: That tho' you ought to be industrious in some honest course of life, and to be thankful to God, if he bestows riches upon you; yet you are always to regard this world, and the perishing riches of it, in due subordination to the other, and to those far greater and better things, which God has promised to them that love him:—That you should not be immoderately set in the pursuit of riches, or gripe them too sast when acquired, so as to with-

hold

hold your alms from the proper objects of it:-That you should not trust in them, but in the living God, who "giveth us richly all things to enjoy:"-That you should make such a wife and reasonable use of them, as is agreeable both to nature, and to the will of God; and be ready to part with them at his call, in hope of a better and more enduring substance; even those things that are "above, where Jesus Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." Neither are you to imagine yourselves sober-minded, as Christians are obliged to be, till the temper of your minds is conformable to fuch fober maxims as these: For there is nothing in them that favours, in the least degree, of superstition or enthusiasm; which are so far from being the characteristics of a fober mind, that they are directly repugnant thereto. And this leads me to observe more particularly, in the last place, what was hinted in the former part of this discourse, viz.

XVI. THAT all enthusiastic notions, and superstitious practices, stand in opposition to christian sobriety; and ought to be guarded against. A sober mind is not, surely, an insane, fanciful, over-heated or raving one; but a sound, composed and rational mind; a mind well-informed with the knowledge of God, and of true religion; and, upon rational principles, or proper grounds of conviction of the truth, excellency and importance of christianity, sirmly attached to it, as it was preached by Christ and his apostles. All enthusiastic rants and conceits, all superstitious notions and practices;

practices; I mean, all such as are warranted neither by reason, nor by the holy scriptures,

are therefore repugnant to sobriety.

THAT sobriety of mind ought to be considered in opposition to all such fancies, and religious madness, is very obvious from one passage of scripture at least, directly in point. It is in the Acts of the apostles, + and was referred to before. We there find the apostle Paul giving a particular account of his conversion to the Faith of Christ, before King Agrippa, and Festus the governor; apologizing for himself, and speaking of the truth and evidences of christianity. " And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said " with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; " much learning doth make thee mad." Whether Festus spake sincerely or ironically about the apostle's learning, is not at present material: It is evident that he thought him now disordered in his mind, and a religious, raving enthusiast. Upon which the apostle calmly and respectfully replied, "I am not mad, most noble Festus; but " speak forth the words of truth and soberness." In which answer, you perceive that speaking the words of "truth and foberness," stands in oppofition to the reproachful charge as to his being "beside himself" and "mad." One obvious remark upon this piece of history, is, that men of dark and depraved minds may mif-call truth and foberness, madness: For such men receive not the things of the spirit of God; which are foolishness and madness to them. This, however, does not in the least invalidate, but rather confirms confirms the other observation, that real enthusiasm, or religious madness, actually stands in opposition to true sobriety of mind, how often soever one may be mistaken for the other.

IF therefore, you aspire to be sober-minded, you are always, and in all things, to be governed by right reason, truth, rational evidence, and the genuine doctrines and duties of christianity; and to be upon your guard against all wild notions and conceits; all superstition and enthusiasm, whether in principle or in practice.—Tho' there have been times and places, wherein, it feemed, by the preaching chiefly in vogue, to be an established maxim, that people, and particularly the young, must be first put "beside themselves," and made "mad," by a furious application to their passions, with little or no folid instruction to their minds, in order to make them fober! Yea, fobriety of mind feems to have been thought by many, to confift chiefly in an heated imagination, in wild, unscriptural fancies, and in such consequential practices, both in respect of religion, and the affairs of common life, as are directly repugnant to all true fobriety, or a found mind. And young people need to be particularly cautioned against these delusions and infatuations; being, through inexperience, the warmth of their blood, and the strength of their passions, peculiarly exposed to them; especially when recommended to them either by a very foft and delicate, or a tragical, boisterous and outrageous address.

SUPERSTITION

SUPERSTITION and enthusiasm are not, indeed, commonly considered as vicious, or any ways criminal in their nature; but rather only as innocent human infirmities. But it is not easy to see, why they should be treated with so much tenderness, except in some particular cases, wherein they appear to have their origin in corporeal disorders. When this is the case, the subjects of them are to be pitied, like other unhappy people under a total or partial diffraction, arifing from fimilar diforders in the animal frame. But fuch cases as these being excepted, they are real and great vices of the mind; I mean, where-ever they are found in a great degree. For they strongly imply a criminal misuse of the understanding, and of the word of God; which, being rightly used, would effectually preserve people from these errors and delusions. A perfon that makes such use of his reason, and of the holy scriptures, as he ought in duty to make, never did, never will, never can fall into the errors of a raving, wild enthusiasm; so contrary to all true sobriety, and so fruitful of mischief. in the world. For all which mischiefs the enthusiast is as much accountable, as the drunkard, and the man whose anger has got the better of his reason, are for the disorders and outrages committed by them respectively.

ENTHUSIASTS are commonly full of pride, felf-conceit, wrath and bitterness. All their dreams and reveries are sacred with them, all divine: And they who dare to contradict or dispute them, are of consequence hereticks, unconverted.

converted, wicked men, the enemies of God. Hence rash judging and condemning: Hence fatal breaches in families, amongst neighbours, in churches, in civil focieties: Hence envying and strife, and every evil work. Enthusiasm is generally outrageous and cruel as the grave, under a pretence of zeal for religion and the glory of They who are possessed of this evil spirit in a great degree, commonly think they can neither say nor do too much against those, upon whom, in the pride and naughtiness of their hearts, they have waged war, as unorthodox enemies to the most High: Conceiting that by "killing them, they would do God fervice." Almost all great enthusiasts evidently discover a disposition to be persecutors, and to destroy their oppofers, if they dared, and had it in their power: Unhappily mistaking a kind of possession for inspiration, and the loss of humanity for the acquisition of a divine nature!

ENTHUSIASM has, perhaps, been productive of as much evil in the world, as the most flagrant and acknowledged immoralities: Yea, it leads naturally and directly to such immoralities; as was intimated before. It is directly the reverse of the wisdom that is from above," in its nature and effects; tho' mistaken for it. It is neither pure, nor peaceable, nor gentle, nor easy to be entreated; it is not full of mercy, or of any good fruits; it is not without partiality, nor without hypocrify; neither are the fruits of righteousness sown in peace by enthusiasts, but the seeds of all unrighteousness, in divisions and discord.

discord. What dreadful confusions and calamities enthusiasm has sometimes occasioned, nearly, if not quite to the overturning of kingdoms, is known to those that are conversant in history. And let me add, that if our own country has divers times fince the first settling of it, been the wretched theatre of fuch-like diforders and miferies in a great degree, it will render my giving you a very particular caution against enthusiasm, the more expedient. Let me therefore, in the fear of God, and in friendship to you, warn you never to forget that you are reasonable creatures. There is nothing, which is not founded in reason, truth and nature, and in the holy word of God, which is the highest reason, that in any measure deserves the name of religion. You are always to make the holy scriptures the rule both of your faith and practice, exercifing your best reason in discovering the true sense thereof; never admitting any thing as religious truth or duty, but what is agreeable thereto; and let me add, giving your chief attention to the plain, indisputable doctrines and duties of christianity, which are certainly of the greatest importance. The observation of these counsels will, by the bleffing of God, be a sufficient security to you against all enthusiastic, superstitious notions and practices; fo contrary to fobriety of mind, and of fuch fatal consequence, as has been represented.

THUS, my beloved young brethren, I have particularly mentioned, and warned you against, some of the principal of those follies and vices,

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those finful excesses and irregularities, both in principle and practice, which stand in opposition to christian sobriety. An ugly, deformed picture, fet by the side of a fair and beautiful one, serves as a foil thereto; making its beauty the more conspicuous, and recommending it to the best advantage. It is therefore hoped that what has been faid of irreligion, folly and vice, in this and my last discourse, will serve to illustrate and recommend to you that pure and undefiled religion, which was explained to you in some preceeding ones. If any of you have unhappily, heretofore, preferred vice to virtue, and impiety to godliness; it was doubtless, in part at least, because you did not clearly discern the real beauty of the one, and the deformity of the other. I have endeavoured to place them both in fuch a light, that you can hardly help doing it now, unless the god of this world has fadly blinded your eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel should appear to them. May He that at first said, "Let there be light;" and at whose word it " shined out of darkness, shine into all your hearts, to give you the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ!"

I HAVE endeavoured faithfully, and in the plainest manner, by God's blessing concurring, to lead you to the knowledge and love of the truth, free from all human inventions, resinements, and commandments of men, whatsoever; in humble imitation of the holy apostle, who said,—"Sceing "we have received this ministry—we faint not:
"But have renounced the hidden things of dif"honesty."

"honesty, not walking in craftiness, nor hand-" ling the word of God deceitfully; but by mani-" festation of the truth commending ourselves " to every man's conscience in the sight of God." † If you are convinced in your own consciences, as I doubt not but you are, that I have been recommending to you nothing but fober truth, and fober religion: If you are also perswaded, that I have been warning you against nothing but what is contrary to found doctrine, and to christian sobriety, from a sincere desire of your eternal happiness; then take heed how you reject these friendly counsels and warnings. For in fuch a case, " he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God."-If you are wife, you will be wife for yourselves; but if you scorn, you alone shall bear it!"

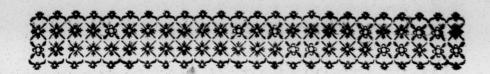
How you have lived in times past, is best known to God and to yourselves. If I certainly knew that any of you had been often and grosly guilty of any of the crimes, which have been cenfured in this and the foregoing discourse, as I do not; yet you may be assured, that I am so tenderly concerned for your reputation in this world, as well as for your happiness in the next, that I should not, without the greatest reluctance, speak of it by way of reproof and rebuke, in this public manner. However, if any of you are conscious to yourselves, that you have not hitherto walked according to the laws of christian sobriety; I must admonish you to repent of all your violations of them; and to bring forth fruits

meet for repentance, by forfaking your past sins. and living foberly, righteoufly and godly for the time to come; that so you may stand acquitted in the great day, instead of being "condemned with the world."

LET me, on the other hand, exhort those of you that are already fober-minded, to persevere in well-doing; to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to perfect holiness in the fear of God-"Finally, " brethren, whatfoever things are true, whatfo-" ever things are honest, whatsoever things are "just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever "things are lovely, whatfoever things are of " good report; if there be any virtue, if there " be any praise, think of these things. Those "things which ye have both learned, and re-" ceived, and heard-do; and the God of peace " shall be with you." †

+ Eph. Chap. IV.

SERMON VI.



SERMON VI.

Young Men exhorted to Sobriety by various Considerations, viz. (1.) Of the Reasonableness thereof. (2.) Of their religious Education. (3.) Of the constant Goodness of God to them. (4.) Of his corrective Visitations. (5.) Of their Vows and good Resolutions in Times of Trouble. (6.) Of the inward Peace attending Sobriety. (7.) Of the Esteem and Honor which it procures.

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TITUS II. 6.

Young Men likewise exhort to be soberminded.

Y young brethren, in the first discourse upon this subject, a variety of observations were made upon the text, by way of introduction to the main design.

In the two next discourses, the nature of christian sobriety was somewhat distinctly explained,

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and curforily recommended to you.

In

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In the two last discourses, some of the many sins, follies and criminal excesses which are contrary to sobriety, were particularly mentioned to you; from all which you were warned to abstain.

I HAVE spoken of nothing as a truth to be believed, or a duty to be practised by you, as a branch of this sobriety, without assigning some reason or reasons for it, how briefly soever. Neither, on the other hand, has any thing been mentioned as repugnant to sobriety, without offering something to your consideration, by way of disswasive from it. So that I have, in effect, been exhorting you to be sober-minded, while my professed design was rather only to explain what is intended thereby, and to shew you what is inconsistent therewith. But it has been my intention all along, by the will of God,

THIRDLY, More largely and distinctly to exhort you to this sobriety of mind, and to dis-

fwade you from the contrary.

I shall, accordingly, now proceed to this branch of my design, by laying before you such considerations and arguments of various kinds, as may be effectual to perswade you to be soberminded, by the blessing of God concurring; or else, if they are disregarded, will leave you the more inexcuseable. Which I pray God, may not be the case with any of you: Though if it should, it will be nothing that is unusual;—nothing but what often happened of old, under the preaching of the apostles themselves, who were so eminently faithful to God, and to the souls of men. Conscious of this sidelity, they left the event, the

success of their labour of love, with God; in full affurance of his gracious approbation, whatever that might be. Whether their hearers received and relished the word preached, to their salvation, or difrelished and rejected it, to their destruction; yet they knew their own conduct with respect to both, would be acceptable to God, who is pleased with the faithfulness of his fervants, whether successful or not. These are the fentiments, which one of the chief of the apostles expresses in the following words: "We " are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them "that are faved, and in them that perish. "the one we are the favour of death unto " death; and to the other the favour of life "unto life-For we are not as many which " corrupt the word of God; but as of fincerity, " but as of God, so speak we in Christ." †

LET me briefly premise a few things here, before I proceed to the proposed exhortation. And,

1. An exhortation to fobriety, implies the use of argument, of sober and solid reasons, addessed to the understanding. General counsels, or loud, pathetic exclamations, addressed solely to the passions; or merely calling upon people to be sober-minded, without such intelligible motives as are adapted to influence a reasonable mind, does not deserve the name of christian exhortation: It is but empty harrangue and declamation; from which no good and lasting effects can be expected, how much soever persons may be moved and agitated thereby for a time. I shall therefore consider you as reasonable creatures; and make

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make use of such arguments and considerations, as are adapted to work upon a rational mind.

2. These arguments will be of a general nature; respecting sobriety of mind in that large, comprehensive sense, in which it was explained in the preceeding discourses, rather than any single branches of it. For the particular parts or branches thereof, have had so much said upon them respectively already, that it is the less necessary to insist upon them now. And it will be more expedient and useful, to urge upon you sobriety of mind in general, considered as containing all those particulars that have been sepa-

rately spoken of.

3. Tho' some of these arguments will be of less weight than others; yet none of them, it is hoped, will be unworthy to be mentioned in a grave discourse, or undeserving of your regard. There is nothing of any real weight, that can be faid upon this subject, but what may properly claim attention, in proportion to that weight. And it must needs be, that in a great number of arguments for sobriety, there must be a differrence in respect of their importance: They cannot all be of the fame, or equal force; tho' they may all be according to truth, nature, reason and scripture. Some of those which I shall offer to your consideration, are, I think, as weighty as the heart of man can conceive; and none of them, I hope, superficial, fanciful or unsolid. But you shall judge of them yourselves: For, I neither claim nor desire a blind, implicit deference to any thing which I say, even from

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from the young; but aim at giving you rational conviction: Without which there can be no religion, whether in principle or practice, becoming reasonable creatures; nor, consequently, any thing that deserves the name of christian sobriety, either in the young or the old.

- 4. These arguments will have a primary respect to those persons, that are not yet soberminded; being designed and adapted both to awaken and to encourage such; to shew them, on one hand, the satal consequences of persevering in their sinful courses; and on the other, the reasonableness, and many advantages of sobriety. But,
- 5. Tho' the following considerations will be chiefly adapted to the state of the vicious; yet they may be of use to all those persons, whether old or young, that are already foberminded; by confirming them in the faith and practice of religion; by encouraging them to "go on unto perfection;" and shewing them the danger, either of a total or partial decline from "the right ways of the Lord." It is hoped, there are some of the young amongst us, that are truly fober-minded; who may yet greatly need encouragement and confirmation in the faith, and in the continued practice of their duty. Neither would I have it supposed, that I conclude there are none such, because I address myself more especially to those unhappy young men that are, or may be, of a contrary character.

THESE things being premised, my young brethren, what I would first of all propose to

your consideration, is,

I. THAT this fobriety, confidered in one entire view as it has been explained, is a most reasonable thing. Reason is a noble prerogative which God has given you; whereby you are diftinguished from the fowls of heaven, and from the beafts of the field; from the horse and mule which have no understanding. It should, therefore, be your ambition, an ambition truly laudable, to act up to your rational character in all respects; and never to degrade or dishonor yourselves, by a conduct repugnant thereto. This, in general, you will all readily acknowledge. And, to apply it to the grand point in view; what is there,—what can there be, fo reasonable, as that you should be sober-minded, or truly religious? This is the fum of human reason, of human wisdom, reduced to practice: For which cause, in the writings of Solomon, wisdom is only another name for religion, or fobriety; and folly, only another name for irreligion and vice. There is nothing that deserves the title of wisdom, in comparison of the former, which so much excels every thing else that passes under the same name; - nothing which deferves the title of folly, in comparison of the latter, which fo much surpasseth all other folly. So the wife man explains himfelf, when he fays, "the foolishness of fools is folly;" i. e. the folly of irreligious, wicked men, is emphatically folly, the greatest that can be conceived ceived of: All other folly is a kind of wisdom, in comparison of this. On the other hand, all other pretended wisdom is but folly, in comparison of knowing God and keeping his commandments.

NONE, certainly, but a fool, can fay in his heart, "There is no God." And if there be a God, the Creator and Lord of all, perfect in power, wisdom, righteousness, &c. is it not evidently a most reasonable thing to love, reverence, honor, trust in and obey him, even with all the heart, foul, strength and mind? greater folly, what furer mark of infanity can there possibly be, than to contemn or disregard, to affront and disobey the only living and true God? Will you abuse language so much, as to call any One that does fo, a reasonable and wise man! Moreover: If Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into this world to enlighten, to redeem and fave it, according to the scriptureaccount, of which there is rational, conclusive, abundant evidence; then, certainly, you are bound in reason to believe in him; to respect and honor him in the high relation of a "mediator between God and men;" to submit yourselves to his teaching and authority, to believe his words, to trust in him, and to obey all the laws of his kingdom, or the commandments of God as promulgated by him, in the name, and by the authority of the Father. What can be more, I will not now fay, wicked and impious, but more irrational and foolish, than either to reject those many "infallible proofs," which there are of Christ's divine mission, and the truth of his gospel,

gospel, or to despise him, and to disobey his commandments, which are so holy just and good?

THERE are, comparatively speaking, but sew things required of you as duties, in and by the gospel, but what even the light of nature shews to be such; but sew things forbidden as sinful thereby, but what even your own reason and consciences might tell you, are wrong and criminal. This is true of all the moral precepts and prohibitions of the gospel; which are far the greater part. The reasonableness of these, considered in their own nature, independently of any revelation, is obvious to those who will duly attend to them.

As to the other commandments of the gospel, which do not belong to the head of moral precepts; the things required or forbidden in them, are mostly such as have a close and immediate connexion with the truth of Christianity speculatively considered; or with the doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, the redemption of the world by him, his refurrection, ascension into heaven, the power committed to him by the Father, and his future coming in glory to judge the world. So that if this scriptural account of things is true, as it most certainly is, the reasonableness and sitness of what is required in the gospel in consequence of, and as grounded upon them, is plain and undeniable. If there are any exceptions, they must be those two positive institutions of the gospel, baptism and the Lord's supper. For as to public focial worship in general; the reasonableness thereof has been acknowledged by all civilized nations; tions: None but an athieft, or mere favage, can even doubt the propriety of it. And as to those two positive precepts; to say the least, there is nothing abfurd, nothing irrational in them. Nay, there is an apparent propriety in them, when confidered with relation to their known, declared ends: One of them, baptism, as a visible sign of our dedication to God in Christ, and both an emblem and means of that death to fin, of that newness of life, and that moral purity, to which we are called by the gospel, " thro' fanctification of the spirit unto obedience;" from whence it is called, in this epiftle to Titus, " the washing of regeneration," and joined with the "renewing of the Holy Ghost." + The other of these institutions, the Lord's Supper, is a commemorative rite of that most wonderful and interesting event, the death of the Son of God upon the crofs, in human flesh, for the salvation of sinful men: And it is, at the fame time, a natural memento, both of the grace of God to us, and of the obligations which we are under to love and obey him. The Lord's Supper, being confidered in this fcriptural light, is evidently a very decent, proper and reasonable institution; adapted, in its nature, to answer the most excellent moral ends; such ends as all but athiefts must acknowledge to be important; i. e. if gratitude and love to God, righteousness, charity, purity, and universal holiness, are of any importance.

IT appears then, my young brethren, That that sobriety of mind to which you are exhorted,

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confisting in a due regard to God, to JesusChrist, and to the divine commandments, according to the faith and requisitions of the gospel, is, in the whole of it, highly reasonable; the most rational thing in the world. I would not, on any account, exhort you to do what is unreasonable in the least degree; either to believe things without proper evidence of their truth, or to act abfurdly and irrationally in any other respect. To believe God's word and to keep it, is, furely, neither of these. There is abundant proof of whatsoever you are exhorted to receive as religious truth: And that pious, holy and virtuous life, to which you are called, is the most fit, decent and rational life, that any man on earth can lead. Neither can you reject the gospel, or live a life of impiety, sin and vice, without contradicting, in the most disgraceful, the most dishonorable manner, that reason which God has given you, and on which you may justly value yourselves. I shall therefore close this head of exhortation, with the words of the apostle Paul: "I besecch you therefore, bre-"thren, by the mercies of God, that ye pre-" fent your bodies a living facrifice, holy, and " acceptable unto God, which is your REASON-" ABLE SERVICE." †

II. THE far greater part of you, if not all, have, thro' the goodness of God, been favoured with a virtuous and religious education. have, even from your childhood, been instructed in the great and fundamental principles of religion,

ligion, both natural and revealed. I might fay to you as the apostle did to Timothy, then a young man, that " from children " you have known the holy scriptures, which " are able to make you wise unto falvation, " through faith which is in Christ Jesus;" those scriptures which, having been given by inspiration of God, are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that you might be perfect, and throughly furnished unto all good works. Having been dedicated to God in your baptifin, you were early taught to read thefe instructive, facred pages, according to the laudable practice of this country; receiving at once, or together, the first lessons of piety and of human literature. You have also, probably, often heard the facred oracles read in the families in which you were brought up, in the schools which you frequented, and in the house of God. You have had the principal doctrines and duties pertaining to godly fobriety, often incultated upon you by your parents, your school-masters and your ministers, in private and in public. You have had "line " upon line, and precept upon precept." I may add, that many of you at least, have had virtuous and good examples fet before you ;-examples of godliness and christian sobriety, in the families in which you were brought up.

Now these are great favours in providence, by which you are laid under some special obligations to be sober-minded, in addition to those

those which arise from the reasonableness of the thing itself, in its own nature. Your guilt will of consequence be greatly aggravated, if you should not know God and Jesus Christ; if you should not remember your Creator, honor, love and obey him, after having been thus instructed, admonished, and trained up in the way that you should go, from your early childhood. Those unhappy perfons who were born and brought up in places, where the light of the gospel does not shine, or at best shines but with faint, broken, and just-glimmering rays; -where they have had far lefs and fewer advantages for knowing and doing their duty, than you have enjoyed; (which is the cafe of much the greater part of the young men now in the christian world:) Such perfons as thefe, I fay, though really inexcusable if they are not sober-minded, are yet far less criminal, less culpable in the fight of God and man, than you will be, should you continue in the practice of vice and folly, after having enjoyed these superior religious advantages. I pretend to no peculiar fagacity or penetration: But I know fo much of the human heart, and the power of natural conscience, that I scruple not to say positively, That that faithful witness for God which is in you, testifies to the truth and justice of what I here fay, if you lend me fo much of your attention, as barely to understand it. You know, my beloved young brethren,

and cannot but know, that you are laid under

peculiar,

peculiar, and very strong obligations to fobriety, by the advantages of your birth, childhood and youth, before-mentioned; and that your guilt will be proportionably aggravated in the fight of God, to whom all hearts are open, and by whom all actions, with their particular circumstances, are weighed in an equal ballance, if instead of being soberminded, you should persevere in vice and impiety. Let me therefore exhort you ferioufly to confider of this matter; not only while you are here present before God, but after you are gone from his house. If you duly reflect upon these privileges of your birth and education, and having the things which belong to your peace, fo early and frequently inculcated upon you; it cannot but have fome good influence upon your minds, and future behaviour. And, for your warning not to contemn and difregard these things, let me remind you of the fad and shameful confession of a foolish, heedless and obstinate young man; with which I close the prefent argument. It runs thus: " How have I ha-" ted instruction, and my heart despised re-" proof? and have not obeyed the voice of " my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them " that instructed me ! †"

III. If you reflect upon the goodness of God to you in your daily preservation, or in the course of his common providence; this will Q 2 have

† Prov. Chap. IV.

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have a tendency to make you fober-minded. The goodness of God, even in this view of it, ought to lead you to repentance; which is the principal end thereof. Ever fince you were fo fearfully and wonderfully made by him in the womb, and from your birth to the prefent time, you have been cast upon him as your guardian, your support, your friend, your Father. He has daily loaded you with his benefits, and crowned you with lovingkindnefs and tender mercies. How numerous are the bleffings which he hath beftowed upon you? From how many evils and dangers has he delivered you, during your feeble infant state, in childhood, and in your riper years?

Now, God having thus protected, nourished and brought you up as children; may not heaven and earth well be astonished, if you continue to "rebel against him," instead of making him that return of gratitude, love and obedience, which is so justly required of you! This is a plain and very forcible argument: Nor can it sail to have great weight in your minds, if there is any gratitude and ingenuity in them. But as this is a very common argument, I will not enlarge upon it; but close it by reminding you of a solemn expostulation of the apostle, relative to the point—"Despisest thou the riches of his goodness,

" forbearance and long-fuffering; not know" ing that the goodness of God leadeth thee

" to repentance? But after thy hardness and "impenitent

" impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thy felf wrath, against the day of wrath—!"‡

IV. NOTWITHSTANDING the goodness and kindness of God to you, in the common course of his providence, it is likely that he h s often reproved, warned and corrected you. by the vifitations of that same wife and good providence; by fickness, by the death of parents, or near relations, friends and companions; or by other afflictive and grievous dispensations. Now all these things are to be confidered as kind chaftenings and admonitions to you; designed in providence to awaken you to ferious reflexion, and as one means of begetting in you that true wisdom and fobriety, to which you are exhorted. And will you " despise the chastening of the Lord?" This were, in some respects, an evidence of greater stubborness and hardness of heart, than despising the more obvious effects of his goodness: I say, the more obvious effects of it; because these are as truly the effects of divine goodness, as any known and acknowledged bleffings. You have had fathers of your flesh, to whom you gave reverence when they corrested you: Should you not much rather give reverence, and be in subjection to the Father of your spirits, under his correcting hand, that you may live? They, possibly, sometimes corrected you after their own pleafure, to gratify a fudden, transient refentment, rather than with a truly parental kindness,

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nd ent that you might become the wifer and happier thereby. But when God corrects his children, his offspring, it is always kindly meant for their profit; that they may be taught to fear and obey him; that they may become partakers of his holiness, and made wife unto salvation.

How highly culpable will you then be, if you refuse to "hear the rod and him that appointed it?"—if you despise, not only the goodness of God in the common preservation and bounties of his providence, but in the corrective visitations of it; and will not learn righteousness and sobriety thereby; but go on hardening your hearts against the sear of the Almighty! Let me close this head of exhortation therefore, with the words of Solomon—"He that being often reproved, harmon—"He that bei

" ed, and that without remedy.†"

V. It is probable that most, or all of you, in certain feasons of danger and distress, when you apprehended death was not far from you, have had your consciences greatly alarmed. On these occasions your foolish and sinful courses have probably been brought to your remembrance, so as to fill you with anxiety and guilty fears. At these times you have doubtless had your hearts and eyes turned to Gcd, if you dared to look up to him, in importunate desires and prayers for mercy and preservation; accompanied with secret promises

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roes mises and solemn vows of amendment, and of devoting yourselves to the service of God, if you might be spared a while longer. I believe there are, comparatively, but sew persons, old or young, especially amongst those who have been religiously educated, but what have had experience of such seasons of distress, awakening and fear; and of such workings of conscience, such vows and good resolutions at those times.

For example: People are generally thus alarmed in times of contagious and mortal fickness; when they see their friends and acquaintance carried away " as with a flood," and especially when they themselves are, by fickness, brought "nigh unto death." Such reflections as the above-mentioned, are usually awakened in vicious persons, on these occasions. They that are, by their office, called often to the beds of the fick, as their advisers and comforters, have frequent opportunities, without being inquisitive, to be informed of their true fentiments in these serious hours. And the fentiments usually expressed at fuch times by wicked men, and not uncommonly even by the good, correspond to those words of the psalmist in his sickness:— "Surely, every man is vanity.—Hear my. " prayer, O Lord, and give car unto my cry, " hold not thy peace from my tears—O spare " me, that I may recover strength, before I " go hence, and be no more." They also that go down to the fea in ships, that do bu-

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finess on the mighty waters, and are acquainted with the perils attending that way of life, know the fears and diffresses often occasioned thereby. They are described in one of the pfalms, thus -" The Lord commandeth, and raifeth up the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves—They mount up to the heavens, they go down to the depths; their foul is melted because of trouble—and they are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble."—There are fometimes also storms, tempests and perils by land, as well as on the feas, at which most people are greatly alarmed; and have their thoughts and defires turned for a time, towards God and religion, in prayers, vows and pious refolutions. Earthquakes are almost universally terrifying; and we all in general know the fentiments of people on these occasions, by repeated observation and experience. There are also the dangers of war; and many others, which are common in the course of human life. On all which occasions, the generality of people are in a degree of perturbation and fear; imploring the divine prefervation, and making fuch-like promifes and refolutions as have been mentioned.

Now, let me ask you several serious questions, my young brethren, relative to these times of danger, sear and anxiety. In the sirst place then, have you not had experience of such seasons yourselves?—if not of all, yet at least of some of them? And were not your sentiments

fentiments on these occasions, such in general as have been mentioned? Were not your consciences troubled within you? Did you not greatly fear death, and the confequences of it? Did you not, at least filently, implore God's sparing mercy, with vows of eternal gratitude and obedience to him? Taking this for granted, let me ask again; Must you not even now acknowledge, that those were reafonable reflexions; and that, in general, you had just cause for them? Were they not the refult, the dictates of nature, and of found reason, tho' not the effect of long premeditation? Or do you now consider them all as weak, childish fancies, and superstitious imaginations? You cannot think them fo, unless you suppose that all thoughts of God, religion, virtue and vice, and of future rewards and punishments, are also childish, superstitious I have too good an opinion of you, to suspect the latter; and must therefore conclude, that you suppose you had some proper ground for fuch apprehensions as those Let me then ask you again, mentioned. Whether God was not kind and gracious to you, in hearing your cries at those times, and faving you from these dangers? Have not many of you reason to think, that if you had then been taken out of this world, according to your fears, you would now have been miserable in another? And do you not think, that you ought forever to bear in remembrance, both those perils, and these mercies and

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and deliverances; together with your vows and good resolutions, so as to sulfil them, by living soberly, righteously and godly in the world? If you should forget or break these promises and vows, or continue to live unmindful of God and your duty, would not this be a great aggravation of your guilt? Or, tho' you should be thus forgetful and ungrateful; yet do you not suppose that God remembers these things, to call you to an account another day? And if he should do so, what excuse, what apology, what tolerable

plea could you make for yourselves?

THESE, my young brethren, are indeed ferious questions; but they are not superstitious or fanciful ones: Neither can they be thought fo by any, excepting those who are fo hardened in infidelity and vice, as to conceit that every thing which is grave and ferious, or which supposes the truth of religion, ought to be discarded under the name of fuperstition - Know then, that your vows and promifes are upon record in heaven! Be affured also, that your finful and ungrateful violations of them are so likewise; and will never be erafed without répentance and reformation, - except, perhaps, when your " names are blotted out of the book of life," and " from under heaven!" O then, forget not the day of your calamity; forget not your vows; forget not the sparing mercy of God to you; lest another time of distress and anguish should come upon you even " as a whirlwhirlwind;" when tho' you shall call upon him, he will not answer !- I shall close this head of exhortation, by reminding you of the conduct of the royal pfalmist; his grateful remembrance of God's favors in times of trouble, and of his own vows therein: An example worthy of your fober attention and imitation—" The forrows of death compaffed me," fays he, " and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and forrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord— O Lord, I befeech thee deliver my foul! Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful—I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my foul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living—I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the presence of all his people." And again, in another pfalm: " I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble. I will offer unto thee burnt-facrifices," &c.

VI. THE peace of your own minds, which is far more defirable than any earthly enjoyments, effentially depends upon the fobriety of them; or, in other words, it depends upon your being truly wife and virtuous, and living such an holy, reasonable life as I am recommending to you. There is no other life agreeable to the superior, and most ex-

cellent part of human nature; none that yields fuch folid fatisfaction to the mind, — the principal, the only feat of rational happiness. Any other kind of life, i. e. any finful, profligate one, must be unhappy, because irrational; because it is contrary to the light and dictates of the mind, or to natural conscience. Pride, envy, malice, covetousness, and all other vicious passions, are in their own nature destructive of human felicity: They at once pollute, poifon and torment the foul. besides: No man, unless you suppose him a right down atheist, such an one as is hardly to be found in the world, or a person quite Rupified and abandoned, can lead an impious, vicious life, without being felf-condemned ;-without having his own reason and conscience against him, and being, fometimes at least, under apprehensions of the just and awful displeasure of the Almighty. All men in general, especially those that have been educated in the belief of the christian revelation, have their ferious hours;—their times of reflexion, in which they cannot, if they would, avoid thinking of God and their own ways; of their duty, and what the habitual violation of it must terminate in at last. No man can live always in a frolick; or in fuch an uninterrupted course, either of worldly business, or of pleafures and amusements, that grave and ferious thoughts will not at times force themfelves upon him. And whenever they do fo, then the wicked man knows, and feels himfelf

to be, what he actually is, a wretch; a felfaccused, self-condemned criminal, presaging in his conscience, a light which "lighteneth every man that cometh into the world," his future condemnation at an higher tribunal. So that even in the midst of jollity, laughter and criminal indulgences, the heart of fuch men is often forrowful, whether you a fee fudden gloom appearing upon their faces, or not. How wretched are they then, at other times!

Consider then, the unhappy state of such a man; of One, whose only refuge from confcious shame and dishonor, from guilty fears and anxiety, is in business, diversions or fleep;—in flying from thought, in flying as it were from himself! Which yet he cannot always do so effectually, but that trouble will pursue him from business to the banquet, to places of riot and guilty pleafure: Nor will it leave even his sleep unmolested. For when he faith, " My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint;" then he is " fcared with dreams, and terrified with visions." # But consider, more especially, the miserable condition of such a man in times of adversity and danger; such as were spoken of under the preceding head: When he is forced more directly upon ferious reflexions on life and death, on another world, and a judgment to come. Where is then his refuge, his support, his confidence and "strong tower"? At these times he can no longer cheat

cheat and delude himself by business or diversions, into an imaginary happiness: The fool's paradife then vanisheth quite away. Shall he therefore, when he is no longer permitted to enjoy this, confole himself with the thoughts of God and his providence; and, "in the multitude of his thoughts within him," have his " foul delighted with these divine comforts"? Alas! these reflexions are commonly the most dispiriting, the most gloomy and tormenting of any, to a wicked man in adversity; they are themselves the principal fource of his distress. So that putting wicked men upon fuch a method to get comfort, is much like comforting a felf-condemned malefactor in prison, by reminding him of his approaching trial, and the equity of his judge! When Paul preached of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, the guilty Fælix, even in the height of his prosperity and glory, trembled on his tribunal before his poor pri-This shews the great power of natufoner. ral conscience; and, how truly wretched and miserable those persons are, who live in the practice of known fin and vice, whatever pains they may take, and how artful foever they may be to difguise it. So that these observations of the prophet, are founded in nature and experience, and are maxims of eternal truth—" The wicked are like the troubled " fea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast " up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith " my God, to the wicked!"

CONSIDER now, on the other hand, the inward peace and happiness, which naturally attend fobriety, or the belief and practice of true religion, according to the "glorious gofpel of the bleffedGod." A fincere christian's reason and conscience are his friends and advocates; approving and justifying his general course of life to himself. He has the testimony of a good conscience; and the consequence hereof is, that he confiders God himfelf as his friend. For " if our own heart condemn us not, " fays the apostle John, " then have we confidence towards God." And the apostle Paul, " Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly fincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." The fincere believer, or real christian, has "strong confolation," even " all joy and peace in believing." His hopes, like the wife man's house, are founded upon a rock, the "rock of ages;" and will not be beaten down by all the rains and floods, the winds and storms of adversity; tho' they may sometimes be shaken.

SUCH hope in God, as is the natural confequence of a fober mind resting itself on the divine promises; or, of pure and undefiled religion: Such hope in God, I say, at once heightens all the joyful scenes and occurents of human life, and brightens every gloomy one. Great peace have they that love,—that sincerely love the law of God, and nothing

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shall offend them: " The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteoufness, quietness and affurance forever." Be affured that our bleffed Saviour did not delude or amuse his disciples with a fallacious promife, and the expectation of an imaginary, fanciful or unfolid happiness, when he said, " Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." And again: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth-I will not leave you comfortless,."—These promises like him that made them, are faithful and true: And whoever will make the experiment, by an hearty, unreferved dedication of himself to the service of God in Christ, shall find them so; altho' it once appeared a mystery even to one of the apostles, " how our Lord would manifest himself to them, and not unto the world. " * Though a stedfast adherence to the doctrines and precepts of Christ, in opposition either to Pagannism, Judaifm, or the Antichristian corrupters of the gospel, may sometimes be the occasion of outward trials and afflictions; yet those who have had the honesty and fortitude of mind to stand these trials, have, in no time or age, found themselves forsaken of God: But could fay

^{*} John XIV. 22.

fay experimentally with the great apostle-"Blef-" sed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus " Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of " all comfort; who comforteth us in all our "tribulation—For as the fufferings of Christ " abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth

" by Christ." †

LET me therefore exhort you to be soberminded, by these very weighty considerations: That this is the way to enjoy true peace of mind, and a fubstantial happiness in this world, whatever crosses, disappointments and outward afflictions you may meet with: And, on the other hand, that if you continue in the practice of folly and wickedness, you will be full of disquietude within, and truly wretched whenever you dare to reflect on your state, whatever outward prosperity may attend you. I will accordingly close this head of argument, by reminding you of the words of the royal pfalmist-" There be many "that fay, who will shew us any good? Lord, " lift thou up the light of thy countenance up-" on us. Thou hast put gladness into my heart, " more than in the time that their corn and their "wine increased. I will both lay me down in " peace, and sleep: For thou, Lord, only makest " me dwell in safety." ‡

VII. As by being fober-minded, or truly religious, you will best secure inward peace and comfort; so you will also best consult your credit and reputation in the world; at least in the opinion of those, whose judgment is most worthy of regard:

> t Pfalm IV. End. † 2 Cor. I. 3, 4, 5.

regard: I mean, all truly wife and good men; all who are of a found mind themselves. "The righteous is more excellent," and therefore more honourable also, "than his [unrighteous] neighbour:" He is so in reason and nature; he is so likewise in the estimation of all reasonable and good men. For it is one characteristic of a citizen of Zion, that "in his eyes a vile [or wicked] person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord."

This is not, indeed, an argument of fo great weight, as those which have been mentioned before, and as others which are to be mentioned hereafter: And people, as is well known, may be far too desirous of "that honor that cometh from men." But yet this is in itself a rational motive, and often used as such in the holy scriptures. You ought, doubtless, to have some concern for your reputation amongst men, tho' always in subordination to the "honor that cometh from God." For "a good name is better than precious ointment." This is of real importance to all men in general, and particularly to young men just fetting out in the world. Their present interest depends very much, and sometimes chiefly, upon their character. young man who has no fense of shame, or no regard for his own honor and reputation, is in a fair way, not only for universal contempt, but ruin. And, as was said before, sobriety of mind and manners is, according to the established course of things, the most effectual means of fecuring a good name amongst men. But

BUT you will fay, perhaps, "However excellent a thing religion may be in itself; however worthy of honor, and how much soever some persons may extol it; yet the greater part of mankind, and those with whom One must be chiefly concerned, are foolish and vicious. They do not esteem a person the more, some of them the less, on account of his sobriety. Many will rather ridicule and scoff at him, than honor, speak well of or befriend him, for his religion and virtue." To strengthen your objection against my present argument, you may possibly add, "That even some kings, governors and governments, after issuing proclamations for the encouragement of piety and virtue, with affurances of shewing the most countenance, and giving the preference to those persons, who should be found to practise them; and of discountenancing those of a contrary character, have, in many instances, notoriously disappointed the public expectation by a contrary conduct; by courting, carefling and preferring the most vicious, worthless and fordid, and frowning upon, or at best neglecting, men of known virtue and fobriety."

This is a pretty heavy charge upon the world: But as it naturally occurs by way of objection to what was before afferted, I shall consider, and endeavour to invalidate it, as far as is confistent with truth and justice, or, without " speaking wickedly for God." The following observations, I imagine, will shew that this objection has much less weight in it than you R 2 may may think; and leaves my argument all the

force that it was supposed to have.

1. IT must be allowed that piety and virtue are far from being honoured fo much in the world, as they ought in reason to be. But put the matter upon the worst supposition that can be made:—Suppose that those who honor religion in their hearts, or think the better of the virtuous and fober for being fo, are very few in comparison of those who inwardly despise both: Yet, upon this most unfavourable supposition, let me ask, Which is the most to be desired, the approbation and esteem of the few wife and knowing, who judge of things according to nature, truth and propriety; or that of a vast multitude of fools and madmen, who are really ignorant what true worth, excellency and honor confift in? If you were painters, statuaries or architects; if you were poets, musicians or orators; and not riches, but reputation was your principal end, would you not be ambitious of pleafing the best judges, the greatest masters in these noble arts, rather than vast ignorant multitudes, who had neither skill, taste nor judgment in them? And so in all other arts and professions, if you had a view to reputation only, not gain? Doubtless you would. The application of this to the point in hand, is easy. If there were but three, two, nay, but one wife and good man in the world; but one who distinguished rightly betwixt persons or characters, and honoured virtue and sobriety, you ought in reason to covet the approbation and esteem of that one man, more than that that of the whole ignorant and wicked world beside: Especially when you reflect, that his judgment is ratified in heaven, by Him that has faid, "Them that honor me, I will honor; and they " that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." But,

2. THE supposition here made, is very injurious to the world. For there are great numbers of people in all christian and protestant countries, and particularly in our own, who are fincere lovers of virtue and religion; and who accordingly esteem those that practise them, far more than they do the vicious, profane and dissolute. The proportion which the good bear to others, in point of number, cannot be determined: But, that it is very confiderable, cannot be denied without great uncharitableness. And if you are sober-minded, you may depend upon the esteem of these in general, so far as you and your characters are known to them. All the truly virtuous and good, esteem and honor persons of the same character, as such. And whenever it seems to be otherwise, it is because they do not know them to be such; but are under a mistake as to their character, either because of some particular opinions which they may hold, that are supposed to be inconsistent with piety, or on some other account. But these cases being excepted, which are very rare amongst the truly wise and sober; all good men in general actually love and honor one another. If they ever dislike each other, it is not, considered under their real characters as virtuous and pious, but their mistaken characters as vicious or impious, that they do fo.

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3. THERE are many more people who honor virtue in others, than practife it themselves. By what I have read and observed, there is a very general regard paid to religion and virtue, even by vicious men. There is a witness for God and religion in the breafts of very wicked persons; which causes them, in some measure, to esteem and reverence that virtue in others, which they have not the resolution and integrity to practise. Besides: Their own interest, which, you may befure they love and regard, naturally leads them, fome particular cases being excepted, to form connexions, at least in affairs of commerce and business, with the sober, honest and virtuous, who, they know, will not wrong and deceive them; rather than with persons of openly profligate, or fuspected morals. Even knaves cannot ordinarily trust knaves with their interest; but they can and do, much oftener and more freely, trust men of approved virtue and integrity with When good men are despised or disliked by the bad, it is generally, if not always owing to one or other of the causes following. Some good men are, perhaps, of unpopular fentiments in religion; and hypocritical zealots for the established orthodoxy in any country, may dislike them merely on that account. Other good men may have a tincture of fuperstition, enthusiasm or fourness; or they may have some personal oddities, fingularities, or an uncouth behaviour; some disagreeable appendages of their religion, or fome natural imperfections attending them in a degree that is not common. Either of these things

things may create a diflike, and kind of aversion to them, even in the minds of those, who at the fame time cannot but esteem them, considered as men of fincere piety and virtue, or stripped of those blemishes and imperfections. It must farther be allowed, that bad men, whether in bigh or low stations, may occasionally have an averfion to the wife and honest, considered as standing in opposition to their unrighteous, ambitious and avaritious designs. In which cases, however, it is more properly faid, that they have an inordinate and criminal love to their interest, or to power and worldly honors, than that they have any real diflike to those good men, considered as fuch: For they rather effeem them in their hearts, even while they would be glad to have them out of their way. Thus also bad men, whether of high or low degree, may occafionally have some dirty jobs, and wicked work to do, in which none will ferve them, except dirty, lying, "leud fellows of the baser sort;" whom they carefs for that very end, while they frown upon, and keep at a distance from, honest men: Not because they inwardly esteem the former, or dislike the latter, as such. For those they still despise, while they employ them in such work, and these they honor in their hearts, tho' they will not do, but rather obstruct it. As profane and vicious as the world is, there are in fact but very few, if any persons in it, so abandoned as to hate or despise a good and virtuous man, only for being fo; nay, as not to have an inward esteem for him, and a secret contempt for those R 4

those that are of profligate principles and morals. So that if you are truly pious and virtuous; efpecially if your religion is open and manly, free from superstition, sourness and enthusiasm, and from any great fingularities and oddities, you may depend, not only upon the respect and esteem of all the wife and virtuous in general, but also upon that of the foolish and vicious, with a very few exceptions, Whereas, on the other hand, if you are vicious and profligate, you may be assured that you will be secretly despised, not only by the good, but even by the generality of the wicked themselves.

4. As to what was faid in the objection, about men of bad morals being countenanced in some countries, while the virtuous and good have been neglected, after public edicts or proclamations which gave reason to expect the contrary; this is easily to be accounted for upon the principles laid down above—Either the true characters of these persons respectively, were not known; or else the promoters of the former, and neglecters of the latter, had some particular finister and dishonourable ends to answer by such a conduct; which has doubtless sometimes been the case-But, by the way, there cannot be a clearer tellimony given to the esteem and honor that are actually due to religion, in the opinion of the world, or of that dif-approbation and contempt which are due to vice, than such public acts, edicts or proclamations for the encouragement of the former, and for discountenancing the latter; how often soever the world has been deceived in past

past ages, by the honourable, excellent and royal AUTHORS of them-Tho' in all governments, other circumstances being alike, those persons who were supposed to be the wifest and best, have in general actually had the preference given

them, in all ages.

5. ANOTHER undeniable proof of the general esteem there is in the world for virtue and religion, is hypocrify. How many perfons, tho' wholly destitute of the reality, "the power," yet put on the "form of godliness," merely for the fake of their credit and reputation in the world? If an homely bird decks herself out in the rich plumage of the peacock, it is doubtless in order to make a better appearance in the eyes of spectators, than she could in her own-Wicked men know, that if they appear in their own proper colours, they must be contemned, if not shunned and detested by most people; even by those that are in the same " cage of unclean and hateful birds" † with them. They therefore dissemble, turn impostors, and adorn themselves, if I may so express it, with the feathers, and more respectable plumage of religious, honest men; that they may enjoy at once the reputation of religion, and the imaginary gains and advantages of unrighteousness. There would be no occafion for hypocrify, and therefore no hypocrites, if wicked and profligate men were generally as much esteemed and honoured as the good; any more than there would be counterfeit coin, if there were none genuine, that was commonly valued, and that passed current in the world. So

that hypocrify itself, that odious sin, is, in some fort a standing witness for God and religion, in all ages and countries; as well as a proof of the general esteem there is for virtue, how little foever there may be of the practice. tacit confession of the superior excellency and honor of true religion; and that vice cannot well keep itself in countenance, even in this wicked world, without putting on some appear-And if vice avails herfelf thus ance of virtue. of the credit of religion; yet the does homage to her for it, tho unwillingly. For hypocrify is a kind of tribute which the former, with an awkward and shameful reluctance, pays to the lat--ter, her acknowledged superior, from one generation to another, in all ages and all nations.

6. Why do you, my young brethren-?-No, I will not fay, You—But, why do the vicious and profligate chuse secrely and darkness, as the fittest occasions for perpetrating their crimes? Why are they that are drunken, usually "drunkten in the night," rather than in the day? Why does " the eye of the adulterer wait for the twilight?" Why does that of the thief and affaffin commonly do the same? In a word, why do vicious men in general chuse to sin in secret, rather than openly; and, as far as may be, to conceal their vices from the world, unless it is, because they know the world in general dislikes vvice, and esteems virtue; if not practically, yet in opinion?

7. DID you ever know any person that was addicted to flander and defamation, pretend to reproach reproach another, by accusing him of loving or fearing God;—of honouring Jesus Christ, and keeping his commandments;—of observing his own promises, and speaking nothing but truth;—of loving his neighbour as himself, and of being honest, sober and virtuous in his whole conversation?—They that deal in defamation, understand their wicked art, and the sentiments of the world, much better than to say these things of any One by way of reproach; which they know would be the highest praise and commendation.

8. To put this matter at once in the fairest and strongest light, let me ask you the following question-Suppose you had some mortal enemy, whom you would be glad to ruin; and particularly, whom you defired to fee despised and detested by mankind in general; which do you think would contribute the most effectually to this end,-to reprefent him as a wicked and impious, a vicious, faithless, debauched and profligate person; -One that neither feared God, nor regarded man: Or, as One that was truly pious and fober, upright and virtuous;—in a word, a fincere christian both in principle and practice? If you were determined to hurt your enemy's reputation as much as you could; if you were under no checks or restraints of conscience, and if you were fure to be believed by the world, in whatever you faid of him, which of these two very opposite characters would you give the hated person?—You can be at no loss for an answer to fo plain a question: And that very answer, which you have now in your minds, shews that you are fensible, the world in general esteems virtuous and religious men, and contemns and abhors those that are profligately wicked. You know that even the bad in general, much prefer, in their judgment and esteem, the former to the latter: Tho' even the good are often under a kind of necessity of keeping in, having close connexions with, and courting the vicious; -- fometimes, perhaps, for valuable public ends; but probably oftener, for private advantage, or for fear of mischief from such persons; as our American Indians are faid formerly to have worshipped the devil. An unhappy situation! How are they to be pitied, who have some real love to virtue; and yet are obliged, as it were, to caress the profligate, on account of their riches, power, and that influence which they often have in the affairs of this foolish, corrupt and wicked world?—

I CANNOT but make this one short reflexion on the foregoing observations, viz. That from them it plainly appears, that vicious men, more especially under the light of the gospel, are all in general felf-condemned; inafmuch as they cannot but acknowledge and approve the right, in their own judgment and consciences, as honourable and praise-worthy; and yet habitually do the wrong, from an evil propenfity in their na-To allude to the words of the apostle, they consent to the law of God, that is holy, just, good and spiritual; but still themselves are " carnal, fold under sin," as bond-servants and flaves to it; whose tyrannical dictates they obey, contrary contrary to the light and law of the mind. For that which they do, they allow not; neither do they do that good, to which they have some faint defire; but what they do in a fort hate, that they practife—O wretched, that they are! Who, or what shall deliver them from the body of this death, but "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ

Jesus ?"

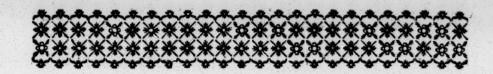
LET me exhort you, my young brethren, duly to consider those motives to true religion, which have been mentioned in this discourse. Whatever your corrupt passions may have to object, I know that I have a powerful party on my side in your breasts and bosoms; I mean your own conscience, your own reason. To that, and to God, the source of all reason, light, truth and justice, I have surely a right to make an appeal from the partial, bribed, blind judgment of passion, and carnal affections. accordingly lodge lmy appeal there, with them: And you must, whether you will or no, answer, and give an account of yourselves, at both those tribunals; -unless you should give up the cause by confenting, as you are exhorted, " to be fober-minded.'

LET me just add, with reference to the lastmentioned argument, as to your reputation in the world; that this will very much depend upon your behaviour in youth. The character is most commonly formed and established in that feafon of life, either as good or bad: And whichever of them it is, it will be of no small consequence to you in this world, while you are inhabitants habitants of it. A bad name is often of fatal confequence to a young man just fetting out in the world, as to his interest therein. other hand, "a good name is rather to be chosen " than great riches, and loving-favor, than filver " and gold." A good character preserves old, and creates new friends; it is at once agreeable and advantageous in many respects. Allow me then, as One fincerely concerned for your temporal, as well as eternal good, to exhort you feafonably to take care of your reputation and honor, by a discrete, sober and virtuous behaviour. any of you have unhappily, by former miscarriages, brought difgrace upon yourselves; lose no time, but immediately endeavour to retrieve your characters, by making it manifest that you have feen your errors, and are reformed.

THE world is candid enough to make fome confiderable allowances for the errors of young men, if they are not obstinate in, but speedily reform them. In this case, their unexperienced, tender age is a powerful advocate for them: It pleads fo eloquently in their behalf, that it never fails to excite compassion, and to obtain a pardon for them from the world. And, what is of infinitely more importance to you, if you fincerely repent of, and forfake your evil ways, God will not remember them against you: He will not be always wroth, neither will he keep his anger forever. "If the wicked will turn from all his fins that he hath committed—and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. All his transgressions that he he hath committed, they " shall not be mentioned unto him"-With God you have a far more powerful advocate than your youth; - One whom the Father heareth always, even " Jesus Christ the righteous." But still you ought to plead, still to implore mercy for yourselves. And I shall conclude this discourse with reminding you of part of a prayer of the royal psalmist. which you might do well to consider and imitate-" Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies. " and thy loving-kindness; for they have been " ever of old. Remember not the fins of my " youth, nor my transgressions: According to "thy mercy remember thou me, for thy good-" ness fake, O Lord.—For thy name sake, O "Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great!"+

+ Pfalm XXV.

SERMON VII.



SERMON VII.

Young Men exhorted to Sobriety, from other Considerations, viz. (8.) Of their temporal Advantage. (9.) Of their Usefulness in the World. (10.) Of those Persons whom they will please hereby. (11.) Of those whom they will gratify by the contrary. (12.) Of one End of Christ's coming into the World, namely, to "purify unto himself a peculiar people," &c.

TITUS II. 6.

Young Men likewise exhort to be soberminded.

Y young brethren, in the preceeding discourse you were exhorted to be so-ber-minded, by divers considerations and motives, which need not now be mentioned. I shall therefore, without any repetition, proceed in this exhortation, by laying before you some other arguments; all, of real, tho' not of equal weight;

weight: Hoping that, for your own fakes, you will give such an attention to them, as they may reasonably demand. Wherefore,

VIII. To be fober-minded will be most for your advantage in this world; most for the health of your bodies, and for your outward prosperity in all other respects. How this tends to the peace and comfort of your minds, and also to your reputation in the world, was shewn in the foregoing discourse. And it may answer a valuable end, if I can now make it appear to you, that your temporal felicity in other respects, very much depends upon your being truly religious. Tho' this is not an argument of the greatest weight; yet it is of considerable importance, as it may remove some prejudices against religion, arifing from a false supposition, that it is prejudicial to your worldly felicity. And I shall infift the longer upon this argument, because, as I apprehend, it is not fo frequently and particularly discussed in the pulpit, as might be for the credit, and thereby for the interest of religion.

But you will observe, that when I speak of it as being for your interest to be soberminded, in conformity to the principles and precepts of christianity, I speak with particular reference to the age and country in which you live; wherein this religion is publicly countenanced, and generally professed. For, no regard being had to these circumstances, it is supposeable that the belief, profession and

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practice

practice of the christian religion, might be very detrimental to a person's credit and worldly interest, in that fense of them which is here intended. If you lived in an age and country, wherein the name of Christ was generally odious, his religion not publicly telerated, and his disciples, as such, repreached, persecuted, subjected to the confication of goods, to bonds and imprisonment; or even, wherein they were not allowed the privileges and liberties common to other subjects; upon this fupposition, I fay, your godly and christian sobriety would manifestly tend to hurt your reputation and interest, instead of promoting them. This was the condition, this the situation, these the circumstances of christians, for about three hundred years after Christ; till the days of the Emperor Constantine the Great. The public voice condemned them as an odious, impious feet; the laws were against them; their enemies were inveterate, and had all the power in their hands. The confequence was, that they were denied the common privileges of men; and "whofoever would live godly in Christ Jesus, suffered persecution" in one or other, and fometimes many of its hateful forms. Christians; in those sad times, besides being reproached for the name of Christ, were often called to fuffer the loss of all things; they were haled before kings, governors and other magistrates; they were imprisoned, thrown into dungeons, stoned, impaled, crucified, flain

flain with the fword, fawn in funder; and forced to fuffer unnumber'd indignities and tortures, merely as christians; not accepting deliverance, on the condition of renouncing the faith, and blaspheming the name of Christ "that they might obtain a better refurrection." And though the perfecution did not rage against them in the same degree of fury, during the long period before-mentioned; yet in any part thereof, it was apparently contrary to a man's worldly reputation and interest, to be a christian: As it may be even at this day, in countries where the laws and people in general, are against the religion and disciples of Christ; and as it may be for protestants in roman-catholic countries, or any others called christian, where there is not a general toleration. dentivitends to a

Bur with respect to ourselves, and to this happy country of liberty, the cafe is quite otherwise. Christianity is commonly profesfed; the laws countenance and support it; the government is in the hands of christians, and christians enjoy some privileges which others do not. There is here a general liberty and toleration for all to worship God according to their consciences (not a little grievous to some particular persons of dark, contracted and groveling minds.) And it is in general a very reputable thing amongst us, to be a pious, virtuous and good man. Now, under these circumstances, I say, and you may exfily perceive, it is most for your worldly And,

1.1 As, in these circumstances, virtue and religion will be a recommendation of you to the esteem of people, it manifeltly tends to your interest in this respect; I mean, to what is commonly called worldly gain or profit. For people in general, good and bad, some few cases being excepted, would much rather trust, and have connexions in business with a fober, honest man, of an established good character, than with a vicious and profligate one, of a contrary character. And this evidently tends to a person's interest, whatever be his station or calling in life; especially when it is confidered, that the wifer and better part, and those who ordinarily have it most in their power to ferve and befriend you, will be more particularly disposed to do so, from real regard; while others, for their own interest, will rather employ, or have concerns with an honest man, ceteris paribus, than with one of no religion, or of bad morals.

ment, for which some of you, perhaps, either do, or may in time stand as candidates; it is to be hoped that, all other circumstances being alike, your known integrity, and good behaviour in life, would be some recommen-

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dation of you, and procure a preference. Certainly it would, under any tolerably wife and good administration of government; efpecially in those governments which have a great mixture of the popular form, and in countries where there are no iniquitous tests; as in our own. Let me add, that if we have formerly, in certain instances, known persons of infamous characters preferred to magiftracies, or to other honourable and lucrative offices, to the neglect of virtue and merit; yet I should be extremely loth to suppose that this is either now a common thing amongst us, or will be so hereafter.

3. If we suppose the providence of God governs the world, in the manner declared in the holy scriptures; those who love and ferve him in fincerity, have much more reafon to expect his bleffing upon their honest defigns and undertakings, in order to obtain a competency of the good things of this life, than impious and profligate men have, to hope for his bleffing upon their's; especially upon such designs as are in their nature dishonest and criminal. This is the least that can be faid with reference to what may be expected from divine providence, in the ordinary course of it, according to very numerous reprefentations in scripture; which are rather confirmed than contradicted by experience. Tho', as we do not certainly know the hearts of men, and may be deceived as to their characters; we must needs be very inadequate S 3

adequate judges, when the conduct of providence is, or is not, strictly agreeable to these representations. And tho' there may be some exceptions here, as under other general rules; yet it is not improbable, that these may be much fewer in the present case, than is commonly supposed. The examples of wicked men prospered in this world, are indeed very numerous, and indifputable: For God is good to the unthankful and to the evil. But it is not, neither can it be, fo certain to us on the other hand, that the good are often forfaken, or left destitute by him. And it is not unworthy of remark, that in that pfalm wherein the prosperity of some wicked men, is fet forth more amply than in any other part of scripture, the inspired psalmist makes the following declaration, fo much to the honor of divine providence: " The steps of a good " man are ordered by the Lord; and he de-" lighteth in his way. Tho' he fall, he shall " not be utterly cast down: For the Lord " upholdeth him with his hand. I have been " young, and now am old; yet have I " not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his " feed begging bread. " †

,4. It should be observed, that many of those virtues which belong to the head of christian sobriety, have, in their very nature, a direct tendency to promote your temporal interest and happiness. For example; diligence in your worldly callings, temperance

in meat and drink, and a virtuous moderation in other respects, have a plain, direct tendency to fecure and advance your wealth, your health and ease; and to prolong your lives. In comformity whereto, Solomon fays of wisdom, that " length of days is in her right hand, and in her left, riches and honor.'

On the other hand,

5. Most of those vices and excesses, which are repugnant to fobricty, have as direct and apparent a tendency to prejudice your worldly interest and happiness. For is not this evidently true of idleness, intemperance, pride and luxury - of walting your time, and squandering away your money in riotous living, in leudness and debauchery, in the fopperies of drefs, in frequent and expensive diversions, and the like? These are all costly and impoverishing vices: And some of them are as prejudicial to the health of your bodies, as they are to your purfes and your fouls. How many fad examples have there been of people, particularly of young men, that have, by these and such-like follies and excesses, absolutely destroyed themselves as to this world? -- their reputation, their eftates, their health, their lives! - " Be not over much wicked, " fays the wife man; " neither be thou foolish: Why shouldest thou die before thy time?" But when or where did you ever know a young man ruin and destroy himself by his wisdom or sobriety, his virtue and religion! 6. IF

6. If it should be said, that a man has fometimes an opportunity to increase his riches by dishonest means;—for example, by lying, perjury, extortion, taking bribes, theft, fraud, or lawless violence and robbery: And that, if he foregoes these tempting and precious opportunities for the fake of religion and a good conscience, his virtue is then prejudicial to his interest: I will not " speak wickedly for God," by absolutely denying that any man ever did, or can, increase his wealth by fuch unjust means: Even our own age and country might furnish some examples of this kind. But let me make a few queries here. Do you not think, there are many more people, who hurt their worldly interest in the end by dishonesty; by losing their credit, character and bufiness, than there are who prejudice it by a strict adherence to truth and justice, and a steady perseverance in honest courses? I think this will admit of no doubt: So that the advantage, upon the whole, is still on the fide of virtue and fobriety. But, admitting that you were absolutely fure, as you cannot be, of bettering your worldly circumstances in the end, by any iniquitous means; let me next ask, How much you think it is honestly worth to be a knave; a liar, cheat, or perjured villain? I conclude, you would not forfeit your honor and conscience for a very trifling fum, as many have done. For how much then, do you think it would really be worth while to do it? Even Balaam, who fecretly loved

loved the wages of unrighteousness, could not but fay in his calm reflexions, when Balak the King of Moab offered him a large fum to do a wicked thing-" If Balak would give " me his house-full of filver and gold, I can-" not go beyond the commandment of the " Lord, to do good or bad." * - Now, was this a reasonable reflexion, or was it not? You cannot deny it to be fo. And can you hope, by any unrighteous means, to get more than a royal palace-full of filver and gold? And if you could, yet would not these ungodly gains be over-ballanced by the uneafy reflexions in your own minds? Would not your real happiness in this world be rather obstructed than promoted, by these unrighteous, tho' gainful practices? But fuch great gains of iniquity and fraud, as thefe, are wholly imaginary, unless perhaps, you were kings or princes, or their chief ministers and favourites. — If you are dishonest, or ever so wicked and avaritious; yet you must play at far smaller games than these. Nay, according to the ordinary, established course of things, interest is actually on the side of virtue and honesty. Tho' religion, honor and conscience were wholly out of the question; yet any common man would run a most imprudent rifque in becoming a knave and villain, with a view to worldly gain. Almost all persons, except a few great men and their tools, hurt their interest at last, instead of serving it, by injustice

^{*} Num. XXIV. 13.

injustice and oppression, fraud and violence. How often do men utterly ruin their credit, and with it, their temporal interest, by being greedy of gain, and using lawless means to obtain it? Yea, how often do they hereby procure infamous punishment, with the loss of all, from the hands of civil justice? and even capital punishment? It is therefore evident, upon the whole, according to the good old proverb, that honesty is the best policy; tho' we confine our views intirely to worldly gain and profit. " An inheritance may be gotten " hastily at the beginning", fays the wife man, " but the end thereof shall not be blessed."-And again: " Envy not the oppressor, and " and chuse none of his ways-The curse of " the Lord is in the house of the wicked: " but he bleffeth the habitation of the just." And God declareth by the prophet Jeremiah, That " as the partridge fitteth on eggs, and " hatcheth them not; so he that getteth " riches, and not by right, shall leave them in " the midst of his days; and at his end shall " be a fool."

7. But you will fay, perhaps, that giving alms to the poor is one of the duties of religion; and that this is directly contrary to a person's worldly interest, and tends to poverty. Let me briefly hint a few things, relative to this objection. And, first; in giving alms every man is bound in reason to have fome confideration of his own ability, circumstances, real occasions, and the obligations of justice

justice to his family, and to others. No perfon, except in some very uncommon cases, is obliged to give more than he can afford without much difficulty, or streightning himself; never, more than is confistent with the obligations which he is under to others in point of justice. In the next place, if you are industrious, and avoid all foolish, extravagant and finful expences, as religion obliges you to be and do, you may the better afford to give fomething to the necessitous fick and poor. A quarter part of what many confume in their expensive follies and vices, both to the hurt of themselves and others, might make them tolerable good christians in point of alms-giving, if employed in that way, from a good principle. Tho' you should discharge this christian duty, as far as could in reason be expected of you, yet it would probably be much less expensive to you than those vices, follies and excesses, which are common amongst young men: And you would, at the fame time, have a rational and folid fatisfaction therein: whereas shame and remorfe are the natural fruits of intemperance and luxury. riot and debauchery. Again: Though you were wholly destitute of christian sobriety: yet if you had but common humanity, you would not refuse an alms, once in a while, to a miserable fellow-creature ready to perish with cold or hunger, when it was in your power to relieve him. So that your being truly religious, and giving alms from a chri-

stian principle, might not, perhaps, be the occasion of any great addition to your expences of this fort: I mean, unless you were otherwise to be hardened to a great degree indeed; fo as to be destitute of the common feelings of pity and compassion, as well as of the love of God. You must get rid of all fympathy and humanity, and be worse than barbarians; I mean, become mifers, if you would fave all expences of this kind; for, merely being destitute of christianity, will not anfwer the end. Moreover; you may reasonably expect the bleffing of God abundantly to make up to you whatever you bestow in difcrete and well-timed charity to the poor, according to his commandments. There are many passages of scripture, directly to this purpose. I have time to remind you of two or three only, from the writings of Solomon -Honor the Lord with thy substance;—so " shall thy barns be filled with plenty"-" He " that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord; " and that which he giveth, he will furely " repay him." And very observable is the following passage: " There is that scattereth, " and yet increaseth: And there is that with-" holdeth more than is meet; but it tendeth " to poverty. The liberal foul shall be made " fat; and he that watereth, shall also be " watered himself." * You can then have no reasonable objection against religion, on account of its tendency to impoverish you in the way of alms-giving: But this objection stands.

stands in great force against irreligion, oppresfion, uncharitableness, sloth, luxury, riot,

and every kind of vicious excess.

Upon laying together what has been faid under this, and some preceding heads of argument, there is one general, and very important reflection in favour of religion, which naturally arifes. It is this, that as a fober, religious life is the only reasonable one; so it is by far the happiest, and, in all respects, the most for your advantage in this world. you place happiness in having peace of mind; that has been shewn to be the genuine fruit of religion; as disquietude within, is the invariable consequence of irreligion, vice and folly. If you place it in reputation, or the good opinion of others; that is the natural attendant of virtue and fobriety; as contempt and diffrace are of the contrary. If you place it in bodily health and long life; these are most effectually promoted by sobriety; as fickness, pains and a premature death, are the frequent effects of intemperance, and profligate morals. If you place it in worldly riches; religion and virtue are very friendly to it in this view: Whereas there are many vices which tend directly to poverty; much more fo, than any one virtue that can be named. These things are not only certain, but obvious; they lie level to all capacites. And is it not a great recommendation of religion to your judgment, your reason, that it is the most sure and effectual means imaginable, fome fame extraordinary cases being excepted, to promote your temporal selicity in all these respects?—your peace of mind, your reputation and honor, your health with length of days, and your interest, in the most usual sense of this word? This is strict truth, according to the established course of things, at least in all countries where the true religion is publickly countenanced, and generally professed. So that tho' "gain is not godliness," as some may imagine; yet we have the best authority to say, that "godliness is profitable "unto ALL things; having promise of the "life that now is, and of that which is to "come. This is a faithful saying. ‡"

WHAT then are all those imaginations which young people commonly entertain about religion, as if it were unfriendly to their temporal interest and felicity? What are all such imaginations, I say, but idle fancies, chimeras and hobgoblins, which mere fiction, or the father of lies has invented, to impose -upon your credulity, and deceive you to your destruction? As if the ways of wisdom, of virtue and of God, were gloomy, joyless, hard and disagreeable; and those of folly, vice and fatan, eafy, profitable, delightful, and truly happy! What a reproach is it to -human nature, that fuch bugbears as these; conceits, fo contrary to all probability and sense, to the word of God, and to the experience of all wife and good men, should ever gain

gain the least credit, so as to frighten either the old or young from being fober-minded; and to make them believe that true happiness is

the fruit of error, folly and vice!

IT is probable that some well-meaning men have contributed largely to the carrying on fo strange and pernicious a delusion, not only by their own gloomy, and over-auftere behaviour; but by abridging the innocent pleafures and liberties of youth, in divers respects; particularly by representing all recreations and pastimes as inconsistent with pure and undefiled religion, instead of being content with guarding against the abuses of them. There is ground to think that these irrational and unscriptural severities, have been a fatal stumbling-block to many young people; and made them dread the very thoughts of religion, as if it were an irreconcileable foe to all temporal happiness. But as it is incumbent upon the teachers of religion, utterly to discountenance every thing that is unreasonable, and contrary to the laws of God; they ought doubtless, on the other hand, to allow and permit to all, particularly to the young, all those innocent liberties and amusements, which the word of God allows or permits. He that adds to the commandments, by forbidding what God has not forbidden, is as prefumptuous and criminal as he that diminishes from them, by nullifying some of his precepts. In many cases the former is of as bad consequence as the latter, to the interest

of virtue and religion in the world. It is fo particularly in this case, when the young are deterred from being sober-minded, by being unwarrantably abridged of those recreations and amusements, which God has not prohibited, and which human nature, in it's prefent state, seems to require. Nor are the " teaching for doctrine the commandments of men," and laying "heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, on men's shoulders," the flightest accusations which our Lord brought against those grave, austere, proud, solemn-fac'd hypocrites, the ancient scribes and pharisees.* There is, in short, no one pleasure or satisfaction in life, that is proper to the nature of man, but what may be enjoyed in far greater perfection, within the limits and laws of a truly christian sobriety, than it can possibly be enjoyed in the violation of them, or in the ways of folly, vice and criminal excess. The ways of wisdom are, in the highest sense, ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. This you will experimentally know, whenever you, in earnest, make the experi-To proceed, ment.

IX. Your future usefulness, as well as your own honor, interest and happiness in the world, greatly depends upon your sobriety and good conduct. He that lives soberly, righteously and godly in the world, cannot be a mischievous member of society: Nay, he

^{*} Of the lawfulness and the abuses of Recreations, see Serm. IV. page 143 —— 150 inclusive.

he cannot but be ferviceable, and a real ornament to it in his station, whether high or low; as every member of the natural body, in the regular discharge of its particular office, contributes to the good and perfection of the body. But can the same be said with equal truth and propriety, of irreligious, wicked and profligate men? It cannot, regivery glody of snotted doid at

IT is indeed owned, that bad men fometimes do much good in the world. But this is éither, first, only accidentally; as we say good may be brought out of evil. Or, secondly, the good which they do, is by fuch of their actions as are in their nature good, lawful and right, externally confidered; not by their wicked and unrighteous deeds. Or, lastly, they may do good to the world by ferving as examples and warnings tolit, of the shame and misery which are the natural confequence of vice and folly: So that, by their means, others are deterred from purfuing those courses which are ruinous and destructive. Thus, in the first cafe, the pride, luxury and debauckery of the rich, may be the occasion of dispersing their wealth, and feeding the poor. In the fedond case, a vicious man who is diligent in his lawful worldly business, who fights bravely for his king and country, or who discharges any civil office tolerably well, may thereby do good. Any of these things may be done by a very wicked man; but yet he that thus ferves his country, does it not by his wickedness; but by that part of his conduct which is lawful and right. And in the third cale mentioned, the thief, robber, or other malefactor

Now, my young brethren, if you have the least ingenuity, or generosity of mind, you would chuse to be blessings, and not curses to the world. You would chuse to fill up your respective stations in life, at once with honor to yourselves, and benefit to society: Both which you will do the most effectually by being truly virtuous and sober-minded. Can you, without pain or regret, think of living rather as common nusances, than to the advantage of those with whom you are connected?—or even, of living and dying use-less?—Or, if not intirely useless; yet would you be

be willing that what good you do, should be as it were by accident, as the indirect confequence of your behaviour, instead of being done intentionally and uprightly; so that it may be faid to be the proper confequence of a virtuous and laudable behaviour? Or would you be willing to benefit fociety, only by being fad examples and warnings to it, of the difgrace and mifery in which vice naturally terminates; and so making other men wife and cautious, virtuous and happy at your expence ?-especially at so dear a rate, as your own infamy and destruction! If you well digest these thoughts in your minds, they will sill you with an ardent, a truly noble defire to do good in your day; to be ferviceable in your refpective places, instead of hurtful; and therefore to be wife and virtuous: Especially when you consider, that this will be, beyond all comparifon, the most honourable, profitable and delightful to yourselves.

X. IT should be an argument of no small weight with you to be fober-minded, that you will hereby please your best friends; whereas, by the contrary, you will displease, grieve and offend them. Do you ask, who these good, these best friends are? I answer, in the first place,

God, your Father in heaven. He, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, who is "good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works;" He, I say, will unquestionably be pleased by your being truly pious and virtuous—"Ye have received of us," fays the apostle, " how ye ought to walk, and to please God." T 2

God." If God invites, if he encourages, if he requires you to believe in, to love him, to walk in his righteous ways, certainly he will be pleafed with your doing so; and displeased if you do otherwise. Has he not said, "I love them that love me, and they that feek me carly, shall find me?" Is not his holy Spirit faid to "ftrive with men," to this end? and to be "grieved" with those that resist and oppose him?—with them that abuse his goodness and oppose his light and truth; chusing to walk in the paths of darkness and error, vice and misery? What compassion did God of old express towards Ephraim? what pleasure at his repentance, and return to him?—affuming, as it were, all the paffion and tenderness of an earthly father.—" I have surely "heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus-I " fmote upon my thigh; I was ashamed, yea, " even confounded, because I did bear the re-" proach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear " fon? is he a pleasant child? For since I spake " against him, I do earnestly remember him still: "therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I " will furely have mercy upon him, faith the "Lord." † Confider also the well known parable of the prodigal fon, as it is commonly called; one principal design of which was, to represent the love and compassion of our heavenly Father; and his pleasure in those that return to him. It is faid, that when the foolish, unhappy youth was on his return home, but while he was "yet a great way off, his father faw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." And

And presently after, the father is introduced, faying to the elder brother, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad; for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was loft, and is found." Thus compassionate is God, to those who err from his truth and ways; and thus pleafed when they repent and return. This is also the principal scope of two other parables in the fame chapter: I One of which our Lord himfelf explains and applies in these words:-"'Likewife joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth;"—and the other of them, in words to the same purpose. "Like as a father pitieth his children," fays the pfalmift, " fo the Lord pitieth them that fear him." And, furely, you have no friend equally good and great as the God and Father of all; none whom you are under fuch strong obligations to please; none, whom you ought, from a principle of ingenuity and gratitude, to be so cautious of offending.

ANOTHER of those good friends, whom you will please by your sobriety, is the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ; who loved you so well as to come down from heaven, to live a miserable life on earth, and to die an ignominious, accursed death upon a cross, for your redemption. This you may be positively assured of: For "he gave himself a ransom for ALL;"—" tasted death for EVERY man," and is the "propitiation for the sins of the WHOLE world." In the days of his sless, he shewed the tenderest love and kindness, not only to young men, as is recorded upon several occasions, but even to little T 3 children;

children; taking them up in his arms, bleffing them, and faying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of fuch is the kingdom of heaven." Our compassionate Saviour is said to have been grieved for the hardness of their hearts, who refused to receive his heavenly instructions, counsels and warnings, defigned for their good. And how tenderly did he lament the folly, the impenitence, and the approaching destruction of Jerufalem, when he beheld the city, and "wept over " it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at " least in this thy day, the things which belong " unto thy peace! but now they are hidden from "thine eyes." † And again: "O Jerusalem, " Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and " ftonest them which are fent unto thee, how " often would I have gathered thy children " together, even as an hen gathereth her chickens " under her wings, and ye would not!" What a lively representation is this, of his compassion even for obdurate finners? The Lord Jesus Christ, tho' fet down in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, has the like love, the like pity, the like tenderness for you all in general, now, that he had of old for Jerusalem. His goodness is unchanged; he can still have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; being a merciful, as well as faithful high priest, in things pertaining unto God. And will you displease, will you grieve, will you offend fuch a Friend, by persevering in fin and folly?—One, who has laid you under fuch immense obligations! THE

[†] Luke XIX. 42. ‡ Matt. XXIII. 37.

THE holy angels, the unfeen and unknown by you, are other, and truly excellent friends to you; whom you would highly please and delight, by obeying their Lord and our's; and whom you displease by persevering in your sinful ways. They are all ministring spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of falvation: And it is particularly declared by our Saviour, that "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." Surely then, you will, on the other hand, give them trouble and forrow, if forrow can touch those pure and bleffed intelligencies, by refifting and disobeying the truth. And does it become you to grieve these benevolent spirits, who are as it were your appointed guardians; who delight in doing good offices for you, in conformity to their charge; and who would be so rejoiced at your conversion to God?

OTHER of your friends, some of whom were probably once known to you, tho' now removed out of your fight, and whom you would please by being fober-minded, are "just men made perfect;" the noble army of martyrs, and the whole church of the first born, which are written in heaven. Amongst these are all your pious ancestors, who have died in the Lord; and who now live with him, beholding his face in righ-Amongst them are also, probably, teousness. some of your other near relations, and cotemporaries; those whom you lately knew and conversed with. All, all these, as well as the "innumerable company of angels," wish to see you you truly wise and virtuous; that so, in due time, they may hail you to those blissful regions; and that you may be forever associated with them in one glorious society, "a kingdom that cannot be shaken." Yea, my young brethren, methinks, almost, I hear them now calling to you from the coelestial mansions, in the same words which the two witnesses heard from heaven, when a great voice came to them, saying, "Come up HITHER!"†—For the bride, the Lamb's wise, [the church triumphant] as well as the Spirit, saith, "Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." ‡

Your best friends on earth, as well as in heaven, will be rejoiced to fee you wife and virtuous; and grieved to fee you foolish and profligate. I may here particularly mention your pious and good parents, who have done fo much for you, and whose love you cannot doubt. "A wife fon," fays Solomon, " maketh a glad father; but a foolish fon is the heaviness of his mother." Every virtuous and good parent, could fincerely address his child in the language of the same wise king-" My son, if "thine heart be wife, my heart shall rejoice, "even mine; yea, my reins shall rejoice.—"| All good men had far rather see their children fober-minded, the friends and followers of Jesus Christ, than beautiful, rich and prosperous in this world. And whom, upon earth, should you be so desirous to please and gratify, or so

[†] Revel. XI. 12. ‡ Ch. XXII. 17. | Prov. Ch. XXIII.

loth to grieve and disquiet, as those to whom, under God, you owe your very being?-those who have brought you up with fo much care and tenderness, taking unwearied pains for you; and whose chief worldly concern is probably, to see you well provided for, virtuous and happy?

But you have many good friends besides your parents, who would fincerely rejoice to fee you truly religious. All your acquaintance in general, that fear God, would be pleased to have proper evidence of your doing the same: And I know of One in particular, that would be fo. He shall be nameless! Only I may tell you, he is One that, if his own mediocrity of years would allow him to use the paternal stile with reference to you, could, with great fincerity, adopt those words of the apostle John in his third epistle-"I have no greater joy, than to hear that my " children walk in the truth." Let me just add, that he is One who claims some fort of interest in you; as hoping to have you for his joy, glory and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jefus-

THESE then, my beloved young brethren, are the friends whom you will certainly please by being fober-minded, and displease by going on in the paths of folly and vanity, vice and misery. Think, whether they are not such as you ought to be studious of gratifying in every reasonable way; and very loth to disoblige, offend or grieve, by any ungrateful and unreasonable conduct.

XI. CONSIDER, in the next place, who those persons are, whom you will please by a foolish. criminal and profligate behaviour; that so, upon a fair comparison, you may judge whether you ought to gratify the latter, or the former: For you cannot please both; their views, dispositions and interests being directly opposite to each other; just as opposite as light and darkness, Christ

and belial, heaven and hell.

AND here a certain ancient, samous Prince. who has far more subjects than the greatest earthly Monarch, claims the inglorious precedence. I mean, "the Prince of the devils"—" the Prince of the power of the air," the wicked spirit that worketh in all the children of disobedience. You will, without doubt, highly gratify him and his angels, by continuing in your fins. He made himself famous of old, by stirring up rebellion in heaven; and afterwards on earth, by deluding and betraying our first parents; by usurping a kind of dominion over mankind; by deceiving almost the whole world for many ages; by his enmity and opposition to the Son of God, when he came to rescue mankind from his cruel tyranny, and to destroy the works of the devil. This wicked One has, ever finde, excited the children of darkness and disobedience to oppose the truth, and the kingdom of God on earth; endeavouring by all means to deceive, to hurt and to destroy mankind; in which he has succeeded to admiration. "Your adversary the devil," fays the apostle, "goeth about continually as a roaring lion, feeking whom he may devour." Now

Now you cannot in the least doubt, but that you will highly gratify the devil and his angels, by rejecting the truth of God; by denying and blaspheming Jesus Christ; by neglecting the worship of God, despising the ordinances of the gospel, and living wicked lives. These are the very things which they aim at; which they have all along been, and are still temping you to do, not in vain; the very things in which they place their joy, triumph and glory. Every time you fet yourselves to oppose the truth; every time you take God's name in vain; every time you turn your backs with contempt upon Christ's institutions; every time you speak falsely, or do any wicked thing, then it is that you please the devil; and the farther you are from all fobriety of mind, the more dear will you be to him. You cannot more disoblige these apostate spirits, than by a grateful reception of the gospel, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. They have a fixed aversion to all sobriety, all truth, all godliness, righteousness, humility, charity and temperance. Besides: Whenever any person, old or young, repents and returns to God, the devil is enraged at the thoughts of losing a subject; he confiders fuch a One as a rebel and traitor to himself, and is forely vexed at having the prey which he was on the point of devouring, inatched as it were out of his jaws. These envious and malicious spirits cannot endure that any of the earth-born fons of Adam, should be eternally happy in those glorious mansions, from which themselves were banished for their pride, their fedition.

sedition, and rebellion against the King of heaven. So that there is not one of the angels of darkness, numerous as they are, but what you will gratify by continuing in fin and folly, and

highly displease by being sober-minded.

BUT what has fatan ever done for you, that you should be desirous or willing to please him? Is he your maker? No. Does he preserve and take care of you? No. Did he die for you? No; and is angry even to rage, that Another did. Has he laid you under any fort of obligation to pleafe him? No. Has he any encouragement to give you for pleasing him? No. He will afterwards only upbraid and torment you for your folly therein. Did he ever intend you the least good in any one respect? No; nothing but mischief. Will you then gratify your inveterate adversary, "that old ferpent called the devil, and fatan," or his angels?—especially when you consider that, by doing fo, you will displease the God that made and loves you; Jesus Christ who died for you; and grieve the good Spirit of God, as well as all those holy angels that "kept their first estate," and are daily employed in offices of kindness for you!

But besides the devil and his angels, you may perhaps, by your fin and folly, please great multitudes of the human race, both old and young, that have lived and died in their fins, and are now in the place of torment. It feems not improbable, that these miserable fouls might chuse to have other persons tread in their steps, and share their fate, instead of being sober, wife and

happy.

happy. This is the way in which envy and wickedness, disappointment and despair, commonly work; I mean in this world. Tho' it feems in fomemeasure doubtful, whether you would please even those self-destroyed persons, when we confider our Saviour's parable, commonly called the parable of Dives and Lazarus. According to which, when the rich fool died, and lift up his eyes in hell, he requested that warning might be fent from the invisible world to his brethren on earth, left they also should come into that place When I consider this part of the of torment. parable. I cannot be confident that you would please those wretched souls in darkness and despair, by following their example, and having your portion; with them; tho' there are some other passages of scripture, which feem to favor this supposition; particularly the following-" Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet " thee at thy coming: It stirreth up the dead for "thee, even all the chief ones of the earth" But supposing it were certain, that you would gratify all the wicked that are already in the regions of woe, by being vicious and impious; yet there can be no reason why you should be desirous to please them at all; especially at so dear a rate; and when you confider, that you cannot do this without displeasing the: " spirits of just men made perfect," who wish well to you, and long for an opportunity to welcome and congratulate your fafe arrival at the mansions of joy and glory. But,

LASTLY here, By continuing in your fins. you will probably please some of the most foolish and abandoned of mankind, both male and female. Such perfons as these, may be in some measure kept in countenance, and perhaps otherwife gratified, by having you for their companions in folly and wickedness. And, on the other hand, should you become virtuous and sober, they might be difgusted thereat; looking upon your reformation and good conduct as a tacit reproach to themselves for their continued profligacy, and depraved manners. But would It be any ways proper for you to please such foolish and wicked persons as these, who do not fincerely wish well to you, whatever they may pretend? Especially, when by that means you will certainly displease and trouble many wise and virtuous people; your parents and others, who are unquestionably your friends. Let me here remind you of a passage in the Proverbs of Solomon, relating to the enticements of evil companions; not merely because it is directly to the point in hand, but because I have not any where elfe, perhaps, fo particularly warned you as to this matter, as would have been proper. "My son," says the wise man, "if sinners entice "thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come "with us—Cast in thy lot among us—my son, "walk not in the way with them; refrain thy "foot from their path: For their feet run " to evil-and they lay wait for their own " blood." †

THUS

Thus you have feen on one hand, whom you will certainly please by being sober-minded? and on the other hand, whom you will, or may possibly gratify by the contrary. By it wou will please God, your Maker and compassionate Father the Lord Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for you; the good spirit of God, which is striving with you; the holy angels, who are daily ministring unto you; the noble army of martyrs, and all the faints in heaven, who long to hail your arrival there; your parents, and many other wife and good men on earth, who fincerely wish well to you. But then, on the other hand, you will not hereby gratify, but displease the god of this world, the devil and his angels, who feek your destruction; and, perhaps. the wicked already in a state of torment; as well as a few profligate, abandon'd rakes of both fexes, on earth;—fome of the most feelish, wicked and infamous of the human race, who may either defire you as their affociates in vice and folly, or might confider your repentance and reformation as a tacit reproof of their impiety, impudence, and profligate lives. This, I think, is fumming up the present argument fairly and impartially: Not will I call in question the goodness of your understandings so much, my young brethren, as to suppose it possible for you to doubt in any degree, whether it becomes you to gratify the former or the latter. of them you must needs please, and displease the other: You cannot gratify both. It therefore only remains for you to make your choice! XII. IF

XII. IF you should continue in the practice of vice, folly and wickedness, one principal end of Christ's coming into the world; of his teaching, life and death, will, as to you, be intirely frustrated. The important end which I have here in view, is your recovery to a found mind; your deliverance from your natural darkness and depravity, your lusts, and sinful practices; by being brought to the knowledge, love and practice of true virtue, godliness, and all good works. That this was a principal end of Christ's mediation, is very clearly and forcibly declared in the same chapter with my text, as an argument for fobriety and good works. "grace of God that bringeth salvation to all "men, [fo it might be rendered] hath appeared; teaching us that, denying ungodliness, and "worldly lufts, we should live soberly, righ-" teously and godly in this present world." And again afterwards; "Who gave himself for us, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, "and purify unto himself a peculiar people, "zealous of good works." Now what do these expressions imply, either more or less than this, That one great design of Christ's mediation, and of the grace of God appearing in the gospel, was, that we might be fober-minded in that comprehensive sense, in which these terms were explained in some preceeding discourses? The whole evangelical history, wherein we have an account of our Lord's doctrine, example and precepts; and all the apostolical writings in general, are a clear, incontestible proof of the fame

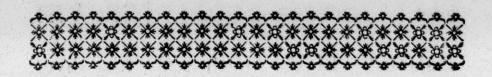
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fame thing. And does it not from hence as plainly appear, that if you continue to live unfoberly, unrighteoufly and ungodly in the world, you will thereby counteract and defeat one principal end of Christ's manifestation in the flesh? Let me add, that if this design of his mediation is frustrated as to you, it will be in vain for you to expect, that the other important ends thereof will be answered; fuch as, your being pardoned and justified, and being finally happy in the kingdom of heaven. For without that repentance and faith, which are the principle and beginning of a fober, righteous and godly life, there is no forgiveness of sins, no justification with God, no title to future glory, honor and immortality.

IF you pay any regard at all to the chriftian revelation, as I prefume you do, you cannot, furely, but be in some measure concerned, that the defign of Christ's mediation in general, and particularly this effential and important part thereof, may be answered as to yourselves. One would think, you must be greatly shocked at the thought of its being frustrated by your persevering in the ways of vice and folly; as tho' the Son and grace of God had never appeared, bringing falvation to all that will thankfully accept of it. What! did the Son of God, the brightness of his glory, and " in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" did the Son of God, I say, give himself for you, that he might re-

deem you from all iniquity,-from the power, as well as the guilt of fin; and will you, notwithstanding this, live in the practice of fin, of ungodliness and worldly lusts! Hath fuch grace appeared, and has the Lord from heaven preached and died, that he might purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and will you still do the works of darkness, the works of the devil, those evil works which God abhorreth! I am aftonished, and even tremble, as you may well do, to think of your thus counteracting the defign of the glorious gospel. What the confequence of this will be, may appear more particularly in my next difcourfe. In the mean time, let me exhort you feriously to consider of the matter; and to bear in mind those words of the apostle, with which I conclude for the prefent — "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the " things which we have heard, lest at any " time we should let them slip. For if the " word spoken by angels was stedfast, and " every transgression and disobedience re-" ceived a just recompence of reward: How " shall we escape if we neglect so great sal-" vation, which at the first began to be spo-" ken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto " us by them that heard him; God also bear-" ing them witness, both with figns and won-" ders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of " the HolyGhoft, according to his own will?

[†] Heb. II. 1, -- 4



SERMON VIII.

Young Men exhorted to Sobriety by some other Considerations, viz. (13.) Of an happy Death, and (14.) Of eternal Life, as the consequence thereof. (15.) Of the miserable Death of the wicked. And (16.) Of their Punishment in the World to come. The extreme Folly and Danger of delaying to be sober-minded. Miscellaneous Counsels and Warnings to young Men: And the whole concluded with a Prayer more particularly for them and the Author.

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TITUS II. 6.

Young Men likewise exhort to be soberminded.

THE first discourse upon this subject was taken up with some introductory observations. In the second and third, the nature of christian sebriety was distinctly U 2 explained.

explained. In the fourth and fifth, divers fins, follies and excesses, which are repugnant thereto, were particularly pointed out. In the fixth and feventh, I exhorted you to be fober-minded, by feveral confiderations of great, tho' not all of equal weight. I shall now, by the will of God, proceed in this exhortation, my young brethren, by laying before you some other motives and arguments, if possible, more important in their nature than those which have been mentioned already: For which reason they have been referved as the last. But they are very common arguments; fuch as are at least hinted at in almost every chapter of the new-testament, and touched upon in almost every fermon you hear; as arguments of so interesting a nature, and fuch general ufe, ought doubtless to be. Their commonness, however, will at least warrant my being shorter upon some of them, than would otherwise To proceed then, be convenient.

XIII. IF you are fober-minded in life, you will die happily, in a state of favor with God. " Let me die the death of the righteous, and " ·let my last end be like his"; - was the wish and prayer of that same wicked Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteoufnefs; but at a time when he was under the prophetic and divine afflatus, and thereby carried into futurity.* This is probably, in some fort, the desire of all wicked men in general; at least,

of

^{*} Numb. XXIII. 10.

of all who live under the light of the gospel, whenever they think of death. This they are often obliged to do; and are indeed, many of them, thro' fear of death, all their lifetime subject to a miserable bondage. How differently soever men chuse to live; yet all in general would chuse to die alike; to die the death of the righteous;—in peace and favor with the great God, and in hope of his

glory.

Now, to be truly wife and virtuous; to live the life of the righteous; or, in the good words of the fame wicked Balaam, " to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God," ‡ is the fure way to die the death of the righteous. But it is impossible in the nature of the thing, that a wicked, unrighteous man, continuing fuch, should die Let me briefly guard against two misconstructions of my meaning here. First, it is not hereby intended, that what is called, or truly is, a fober, christian and godly life, is a perfect righteousness, in which to stand unshaken at God's tribunal, or to meet death with composure, firmness and triumph, independently of the redemption wrought out by Christ, the gracious promises of the gospel, or the "righteousness of God by faith." That fobriety of mind and manners, which is to give you peace and hope in death, is a christian sobriety: And this supposes repentance of fin, christian faith, an humble sense

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of you own unworthiness, and a dependence upon the grace of God in Christ, for acceptance with him. Your hopes both in life and death, are to be grounded ultimately upon the free grace of God, as revealed in the gofpel; and upon your own fobriety, in reflecting thereon, only indirectly or mediately, confidered as an evidence of your being in a state of favor with God, as the required condition of, and a meetness, preparation or qualification for, future happiness: Or, in other words, as it is characteristical of those persons, who are entitled to the benefits of Christ's redemption. Secondly, it is not hereby intended, that none can be faved, according to the terms of the gospel, besides those who have lived for a number of years, or fome confiderable time, in that fober, righteous and godly manner, which the gospel requires. Whenever a finner becomes a true penitent and believer, in the fense of scripture, he is immediately pardoned, justified, and in a state of falvation: Whether he lives afterwards to do works meet for repentance, affects not the fafety of his state, or the certainty of his falvation; tho' it may be of importance to him in other respects, particularly as to his peace, comfort and hope in death; or as an evidence of the genuineness of his repentance, faith, and conversion to God.

WITH these explanations, living a sober and godly life, is on one hand necessary, and on the other hand, lays a solid soundation for peace and hope in death. The conciousness of having lived fuch a life, will exclude a fervile fear of death, and brighten those naturally-gloomy moments. Whoever has light in the Lord to fay with the pfalmist-" The " Lord is my Shepherd—He restoreth my " foul; he leadeth me in the paths of righ-" teousness;" will of course be enabled to join with him in the words following: "Yea, " tho' I walk through the valley of the sha-" dow of death, I will fear no evil: For thou " art with me; thy rod and thy staff they " comfort me." † Or if you can fay with the holy apostle, when the time of his departure was at hand—" I have fought a good fight, I " have finished my course, I have kept the " faith;" you may also triumph with him in the words which immediately follow-" Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown " of righteousness, which the Lord the righ-" teous Judge shall give me at that day; and " not to me only, but unto all them that love " his appearing."* In a fimilar manner the same apostle expresses his hope and joy, as refulting from the witness of a good conscience, in another of his epistles: "For our " rejoicing is this," fays he, " the testimony " of our conscience, that in simplicity, and " godly fincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, " but by the grace of God, we have had our " conversation in the world—"‡ Agreeably hereto, U4

[†] Pfal. XXIII. * 2 Tim. IV. 7, 8. ‡ 2 Cor. I. 12.

hereto, it is laid down as a standing, general maxim in scripture, that "the righteous hath hope in his death:" A maxim which has been abundantly verified in all ages of the world, ever since death by sin entered into it. And the faithful, in every period of the christian church more especially, have been able to triumph over death, saying, "O death, where "is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, "which giveth us the victory, thro' our Lord

" Jefus Christ."

Now, my young brethren, since you must unquestionably die sooner or later, would you not chuse to die in such a joyful, triumphant manner; meeting this last enemy, death, with "hopes sull of immortality;" and, tho naturally the "king of terrors," rather as your friendly deliverer from all pain and sorrow, than with sear and trembling? I know you are desirous of this; you cannot but wish for such an happy and glorious exit, whenever your appointed time shall come. In one word then, be sober-minded; for this will make both life and death happy to you.

XIV. It will not be unnatural to draw my next argument, from a confideration of that bleffed, glorious and eternal life," which God that cannot lie, hath promifed to all them that believe in his Son, and keep his commandments. A principal design of the gospel, is

to proclaim and infure to those who practically believe it, a glorious refurrection at our Lord's fecond appearing, and eternal happiness in the kingdom of God, as his free gift thro' Christ. This is the sum of the gospel, expressed in few words. It is unnecessary to refer to particular passages of scripture, for these gracious promises; the new-testament is full of them. If you are perswaded to be fober-minded, this felicity, this unfading crown of glory and joy, will as furely be your portion, as God and his word are true. Your mortal bodies, which are quickly to be fown in weakness, corruption and dishonor, will in due time be raifed in power, purity and glory, by the all-quickning voice of the Son of God. You shall stand at his right hand with great boldness, when he sits upon the throne of his glory, while all the guilty nations are trembling at his left. Then shall your ears be ravished, your souls transported with those gracious and most joyful words, from the mouth of him that died for you, and to whom all judgment and authority are committed - " Come, ye bleffed of my Fa-" ther, inherit the kingdom prepared for you "from the foundation of the world. †" In consequence of which, you, with all the " righteous, shall goaway into life eternal" ‡; and possess an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

CAN you think of these things, my young brethren, without being filled with an ardent defire to be made partakers of fuch an happinefs, fuch glory, honor and immortality? I am fure you cannot, if you really give cre-What is any earthly inheritance dit to them. which you may have in view, in comparison with that to which the "heirs of God, and " joint-heirs with Jesus Christ," are entitled in the heavens! What are all worldly riches, but drofs and vanity, in comparison with the treasure there laid up for the righteous! How does all earthly glory fink? how is it eclipfed? how does it vanish from the fight, when you look forward to that, which the Lord of life and glory has promifed to them that love him? Blessed indeed, thrice "blessed are they that do his commandments; that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in thro' the gates into the city."—And " the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his fervants shall ferve him. And they shall fee his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the fun: For the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever." Is it not worth while to be fober-minded, virtuous and obedient, for fuch an happiness, such glory as this; even tho' you should make yourselves wretched thereby, during this tranfitory life, which is but as a vapor? Whereas the truth is, that you must needs be miserable even now, unless you are truly religious; and that, by making fure of eternal life, you will, beyond all comparison, best provide for

your temporal honor and felicity.

XV. CONSIDER, in the next place, that unless you are truly penitent and sober-minded, the guilt of all your fins will lie upon you, and you will be wretched in death. There is no forgiveness with God, even thro' the blood of Jesus Christ, but in the way of unseigned repentance towards the former, and faith towards the latter. Which repentance and faith are implied in christian sobriety; and are the principle and substance of it, internally confidered; as has been observed in the foregoing discourses. It is therefore just as certain, that without fobriety of mind, you will remain under guilt and condemnation, as it is, that repentance and faith are necessary to pardon, according to the tenor of the goipel: Than which there is no one thing more clearly afferted in the holy scriptures; tho' some persons, suppose pardon and justification to be prior to that repentance and faith, by or thro' which we are faid to be pardoned and justified. Abfurd and preposterous indeed!

But not to digres: If you should continue in the practice of sin and folly, and remain impenitent till death; how dreadful an hour will that be to you! I mean if you should then have your thoughts and senses about you; and not be snatched out of the world in a moment, without time for reslexion on what is past, or considering what is to come. What horrors of contcience? what diffiels and anguish of foul, will probably seize upon you, when you shall come to lie upon a fick bed? When you shall find your flesh and your heart at once failing you; and God, not the strength of your heart, nor likely to be your portion, but your terror, forever! When all your fins are brought to your remembrance; when you reflect how you have abused the goodness and patience of God; how you have defpifed his grace and mercy; how you have scorned his reproofs and threatnings! When it will no longer be in your power to forget God, nor to think of him, but with fear and amazement, as that almighty, most holy and righteous Being, whom you have offended! When the terrors of the last day, shall be prefent in imagination, and all the pains of hell that can be endured on earth, shall "get hold upon you!" This is the state of wicked men under the gospel, when they come to die; unless they are either self-deluded hypocrites, or quite stupisied, having their "consciences feared as with an hot iron." Thus are they driven away in God's anger, while the righteous have hope and joy in their death. They are often fo over-whelmed with a fense of their guilt, and have fuch a fentence of eternal death in themselves, -in their own prophetic consciences, as not to have the least heart or courage even to implore forgiveness; or to fay, "God be merciful to me a finner"!-Wretched.

Wretched state indeed; to have such a lively sense of sin, that the need of pardon is felt in the most excruciating manner; and yet to have all conceptions of God's mercy, as it were swallowed up and lost in those of his righteous vengeance! Tho' by the way, if finners should implore mercy at such a time, when they are under the actual arrest of divine justice, it is by no means clear either from reason or scripture, that they shall obtain it. For they may do fo, without that genuine repentance and faith, which the gofpel makes necessary in order to forgiveness. And there are many passages of scripture, which look quite the other way; I mean, which imply that the wicked may thus fue for mercy, and yet be rejected; particularly a passage in the Proverbs of Solomon, with which I shall close the present argument; and which I exhort you feriously to consider, lest yourselves should one day be sad examples of the unutterable horrors of impenitent, dying finners— "Because I called, and ye refused -ye have fet at nought all my counfel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: When your fear cometh as defolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when diffress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." *

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THERE is nothing so near as the horror and despair of wicked men in the hour of death, to the actual torments of hell; whether in respect of time, or of pain and anguish: They are hell already begun in the soul. My last argument shall therefore be drawn

XVI. From a consideration of the future misery and punishment of the wicked, as soretold and represented in the sacred oracles. You have already seen what the sad consequence of sin and folly will be, both in life and in death. It now remains for you to look beyond life, death and the grave, into the eternal state; and seriously to consider what the consequence thereof is to be in the other world; a state, the invisible, yet not imagi-

nary, but as real as the present.

If the only consequence of dying in your fins, were, to be excluded from the kingdom of heaven; to be banished from the society of just men made perfect, and of the innumerable company of holy angels; from the face of him that once died to fave you, and from the favourable presence of your Creator, your God, your Father, in whose presence there is fulness of joy: I say, if you were only to be thus excluded from the regions of the bleffed, thus turned off and discarded, as unworthy of their fellowship; yet how can you endure the thoughts of this! When God pronounced only the following fentence upon the wicked Cain. - " Now art thou curfed " from the earth - when thou tillest the " ground, " ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto " thee her strength: A fugitive and vagabond " shalt thou be in the earth"; the guilty wretch was fo overwhelmed with the thoughts of his mifery and difgrace, that he cried out, " My punishment is greater than I can bear. " Behold, thou hast driven me out this day " from the face of the earth; and from thy " face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive "and a vagabond in the earth." * This, furely, was but a light punishment, in comparison of being exiled hereafter from the everlasting kingdom of Christ. Can you then, (unless you are more stupished, more hardened and abandoned than that infamous murderer was) think, without the utmost grief and anguish of foul, of being excluded from heaven, and the bleffed fociety thereof? —Especially, from the favour and enjoyment of Him, in whose favour is life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life; and to be fugitives and vagabonds in some unknown part of the world? Is this punishment no greater than you can bear? O difmal exile indeed, tho' it were but for a few years or days! O insupportable thought! unutterable woe! What! banished from heaven, from the face of your God, your Father, your Saviour; as well as from the fellowship of good men, and holy angels! Think of it but a moment, and make it real to yourselves; and you will find cause for a far more bitter lamentation than that of Cain!

But perhaps the place, the country, to which the wicked are to be thus banished and confined, will be an agreeable one; a delightful region in some yet-undiscovered part of the universe, where they may amuse and enjoy themselves in a considerable degree; and be confoled, by the pleafurable fituation, in their absence from God, and the company of the bleffed in heaven. Far otherwise! Every place besides heaven, will be an hell, a place of torment, to the wicked. And that, in which impenitent finners are to have their abode, is particularly represented in scripture, as a place of "outer darkness," and a "lake burning with fire and brimstone," &c. Joyless region indeed!

AND who are to be the companions of your exile, if this should be your own fate; as it most certainly will, if you should live and die in your fins? The felicity of creatures that are by nature formed for fociety, depends very much upon the dispositions and qualities of those, with whom they converse. But do you imagine that your companions in the realms of darkness, will be such as you will be delighted with?—those, whose society will be a comfort and relief to you in your banishment from heaven, from faints and angels, from Christ and God? fuch as will cause a degree of light and joy, in those gloomy regions? Vain imagination! Your company will not alleviate, but increase your miscry. For what else can be expected from the society of wicked persons like yourselves, in a state of punishment; all, full of envy, rage, despair! Or what else can be expected from the fociety of those malicious spirits, the devil and his angels, who shall have deluded you to your destruction; and who are perhaps, at this very moment tempting you to infidelity; and pleafing themselves with the hopes, that they shall succeed in their designs against you! Can you expect to live in peace with, or to have any confolation, any alleviation of your distress in the regions of woe, from fuch company as this? If Job, in the day of his calamity, faid very justly even to his friends, " Miserable comforters are ye all;" what will you fay to fuch comforters as these? -damned men and devils! Nor will you hereafter have any that are better, if you now reject that divine and bleffed Comforter, the Spirit of truth and holiness.

But perhaps you flatter yourselves, that the time of this dreadful exile from God, in such a dismal region, and in company far worse than the most lonely solitude, will be but short: So that it may be borne by the wicked, at least with some patience, from the prospect of a speedy release, with liberty to enter into the mansions of rest and joy. Far otherwise! In the language of scripture, "they shall be punished with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." And it is said elsewhere, that "the smoke of their torment

X ascendeth

ascendeth up forever and ever; and they

have no rest day nor night."-+

CONSIDER then the time, (for know that the time will come!) when the fmall and great, being raifed from the dead, shall stand before God-before the judgment-feat of Christ, appearing in the majesty and glory of the Fa-THER, to receive the things done in the body. The time when all the wicked, and yourselves amongst them if you die impenitent, shall appear, tho' unwillingly, reluctant and trembling, before this dreadful tribunal; with a quick and perfect consciousness of all your fins committed in this life; particularly of your having despised the riches of God's goodness, forbearance and long-suffering, and trodden under foot his Son, who once came into the world to fave finners; and whom you shall then behold as your righteous Judge! The time when the "books shall be opened," those faithful records of all your past transgreffions in thought, word and deed; (mighty volumes!) to the truth of which in every tittle, your own consciences shall testify as a thousand

The dismal situation waste and wild:
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great surnace slam'd: yet from those slames
No light; but rather darkness visible,
Serv'd only to discover sights of woe.
Regions of sorrow! doleful shades! where peace
And rest can never dwell! hope never comes,
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a siery deluge—
Such place eternal justice had prepar'd—!
Parad. Lost, L. I.

thousand witnesses; declaring to you, with a decisive voice not to be opposed, your just demerits! The time when, these dismal pages being read before men and angels, and there being no need of witnesses, that same Jesus who was once crucified thro' weakness without the gates of Jerusalem, and whose grace you fcorned, shall arise to pronounce your doom with thunder in his hand, his eyes as a flame of fire, and a tempest in his face; thousands standing before him, and ten thousand times ten thousand angels who excel in strength, attending to execute his orders: When, having before passed sentence on the bleffed at his right-hand, he shall turn to those on the left, saying with a voice like the found of many waters, " Depart from me"—! — O amazing, heart-diffolving words! at once too important ever to be forgotten, and yet too dreadful, almost, to be remembered! — " Depart from me, ye " curfed, into everlasting fire, prepared for " the devil and his angels." * - " The word of God," faith the apostle, " is quick and powerful; and sharper than any two-edged fword, piercing even to the dividing afunder of foul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." You can hardly hear those words of the Lord now uttered, tho' by a " man that is a worm" like yourselves, without trembling as the guilty Fælix did, X 2 when

^{*} Mat. XXV. 41.

when the apostle reasoned with him of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come; and tho' you probably confider this scene as far remote in futurity. How then will your hearts endure, when you shall hear the same awful words in more than thunder, pronounced by Him, " from whose face the earth and the heavens shall flee away!" At his feet you will doubtless fall as dead; asSt. John once did, when, in the visions of God, he saw him in his majefty and glory; when "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the fun shining in his strength. " But alas! he will not reanimate and comfort you, as he did the holy apostle on that occasion—" I fell at his feet as " dead, " fays the apostle; " and he laid his right-hand upon me, faying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last. I am he " that liveth and was dead; and behold, I " am alive forevermore." † No! you will be raifed up and revived, only as condemned malefactors, fainting under their pain or terrors, fometimes are, to have the just fentence, the curse of the law punctually executed upon It is not cruelty to punish the wicked according to their demerits, when the ends of government require it; as in the prefent case. Mercy having been before fcorned, no weak pity or tenderness will have any place in this day of vengeance. For the Judge himself, who even now standeth at the door, hath said that

that the wicked thus condemned, " shall go

away into everlasting punishment. "‡

IT were most ingenuous in you, doubtless, to be led effectually to repentance, by the grace and goodness of God; as I would hope that some of you, at least, will be. But if any of you are too far hardened for this, you perceive that motives of a very different kind are not wanting. " Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we exhort, we perfuade men." If the tender mercies of a Father will not, at least let the righteous vengeance of a God, and the fear of wrath to come, ferve to reclaim you from the error of your ways, that you may at last be found of him in peace! If you should not be thus found of him, you will doubtless fay, It had been "good for " you, that you had not been born." You have, furely, more fense and ingenuity, than to suspect I am become your enemy, because I thus plainly tell you the truth. It is important, it is falutary truth; tho' perhaps irksome to some of you in the hearing, and far from being the most agreeable to myself in the speaking. If you duly receive and digest it, and are eventually made wife thereby; you will find it just the reverse, in one respect, of the written roll or book given to the apostle to eat ;--- which was, in his mouth, at first, fweet as honey, but in his belly, bitter as gall and wormwood. This, on the contrary, tho' bitter and unpalatable at first, like gall, will in

in the end and digestion, be sweet to you; yea, "sweeter than honey and the honeycomb." Let me close the present argument with the words of the wise man, addressed to the young; which words, while they seem to encourage young men to proceed in their foolish, criminal practices, are, in reality, the more solemn warning against it. "Rejoice, O young man in thy youth," says

"Rejoice, O young man in thy youth," fays he; "and let thy heart chear thee in the days "of thy youth: and walk in the ways of

" thine heart, and in the fight of thine eyes.

" But know thou, that for all these things

"God will bring thee into judgment. There-

" fore remove forrow from thine heart, and " put away evil from thy flesh; for child-

" hood and youth are vanity." †

Thus, my beloved young brethren, I have laid before you those arguments and considerations of various kinds, by which I would, and now do, exhort you to be fober-minded. It was far from being my intention to fay all, or even an hundredth part, that might be faid with propriety upon this most interesting To allude to the words of the apottle John; if all the reasons for, and motives to fobriety, were to be written down, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." For the arguments for fobriety, or true religion, are in a fort infinite, like God the object thereof: There is no end of them to be found; found; the subject is inexhaustible, to any One that duly enters into the nature, spirit and importance of it. The natural dictates of your own consciences, the holy scriptures, life and death, heaven, earth and hell, time and eternity; and even the commonest objects and occurrents, teem with arguments in an endless succession, in behalf of true religion; clearly and loudly admonishing you to be wife and fober, if you have but an ear to This, in gehear, and an heart to perceive. neral, is the fentiment that Solomon expresses in the rhetorical, and nobly-fublime manner following."Wisdom criethwithout; she uttereth " her voice in the ftreet: She crieth in the chief " place of concourse; in the opening of the " gates, in the city she uttereth her words, " faying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye " love fimplicity? and the fcorners delight " in their fcorning, and fools hate knowledge? " Turn you at my reproof: Behold I will " pour out my spirit unto you, I will make " known my words unto you."

arguments which have been particularly proposed to you, nor the goodness of your ununderstandings, so much as to suppose it necessary to add any others to them, in order to the convincing your judgments what is the right, the wisest, safest, happiest course for you to pursue. No! I doubt not, but that this point, a very material one, is already

I CAN neither distrust the validity of those

gained. Would to God, that all your hearts X 4 and

and wills were as much in the right as to this matter, as I am perswaded your heads are! And, methinks, you must have sadly depraved and hardened hearts indeed, if even they are not in some measure touched by so many arguments, all drawn from the word of God; provided you have so far attended to, as to have a tolerable understanding of them. And having thus far discharged my own duty, by laying your's before you; the event must now be left with yourselves, or rather with Him who hath the hearts of all men in his own hand. Without his bleffing, even prophets and apostles may preach in vain; much more, fo inconfiderable and unworthy a preacher of the everlasting gospel, as he that is now speaking to you.

But you will fay, perhaps, "We are young; and need not be in any hafte to be fober-minded. It will answer the end as well a number of years hence, when we have in some measure sated ourselves with the pleasures of sin. How many are there about us, who, tho' much older, are not yet any wiser or soberer than ourselves? Let them set us an example; it will be sufficient for us to sol-

low our superiors. "

UNHAPPY young men! is the love of folly and vice then to deeply rooted in your hearts, that you cannot bear the thought of parting with them to foon? Do you think it hard and grievous to be put upon the remembrance of your Creator, your Father, even

now in the days of your youth? If young men need not be fober-minded, why did the inspired apostle enjoin Titus to exhort them to be fo? Young men, certainly, need not be exhorted to any thing, which is not expedient for young men to do. So that you must suppose the apostle was under some mistake here, or else allow that yourselves have some wrong conceptions, fome misapprehensions of the matter, when you think of deferring it to a later day. This, I suppose, is a common, and often fatal error of the young. They are destroyed, not so much by any fixed, pofitive resolution, that they never will be virtuous and fober, as by procrastination, or putting off the concerns of religion to a farther, and, as they fondly imagine, more convenient season. I propose therefore, distinctly and clearly, though briefly, to lay open the absurdity of such a conduct. This is, in effect, what was mentioned in my first discourse upon the subject, as the last branch of my general design; viz.

FOURTHLY, To shew you the extreme folly and danger of delaying to be foberminded, till you are farther advanced in years. That this is both foolish and dangerous to the last degree, shall be evinced by a variety of arguments; though I shall not enlarge upon them †

[†] Several of the ensuing arguments, which are here only just touched upon, are largely handled in the author's Sermons on Pfalm CXIX. 39, 60. I thought on my ways-I made HASTE, &c. Particularly in the 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th of those Sermons. This is one reason why they were not more fully treated here.

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Now, it should be observed here, that all those arguments in general, which have been produced in favour of religion, are as conclusive with respect to the young, as they are with respect to the old. The force of them does not depend upon the particular age of people, any more than it does upon their particular complexion, stature or occupation in life. If you are but reasonable, moral agents, the posterity of Adam; and amongst those, to redeem and save whom Christ came into the world, all these arguments stand in full force; whether you are ten, twenty or fifty years old. You might fay with as much truth and propriety, that it will be time enough for a slender man to be religious, when he is become corpulent; for a fair One, when he has been burnt a few years under the equator, or for an Æthiopian, when he has in part changed his skin; as fay, that it will be time enough for you to be fober-minded, when you are more advanced in years.

But to be a little more particular here: If to be truly religious, is in itself a reasonable thing, as has been shewn; then it is so for all men at all times, in every season of life, even from childhood to old age. You do, in essect, yourselves acknowledge religion to be founded in nature and reason, by resolving to practise it hereaster, under the notion of its being right, and your duty to do so. For, if it be not reasonable, why will you practise it

at all? Why do you not rather set up a bold resolution at once, against all virtue and sobriety; and determine in your own minds, that you never will sear, love or serve God? This you dare not, you cannot do; because you know that you ought in all reason to love him, and keep his commandments. So that every day and hour of your continuance in sin, you must be self-condemned, as acting a part that is contrary to your own reason.

Deny it if you can.

If fobriety, or true religion, be honorable at all, it is so at all times; in youth as well as in age. The world in general, as has been shewn, pays respect to virtue and religion, under the notion of its being in nature fit, proper and reasonable for mankind in common; not under the notion of its being proper only for this or that particular person, or If you conpersons, of such or such an age. fult your reputation therefore, you must refolve to forfake your vices without delay, and to be fober-minded from this very day: For all the time of your delay, you will justly lie under the imputation of folly and wickedness. And how great a reproach is that!

If there is any difference, religion is, of the two, more amiable and honorable in the young than in the old. For it is an indication of a mature judgment in that season of life, which is so commonly devoted to levity and folly, to vanity and vice. It seems less praise-worthy in an old man to be wise and sober, than

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for a young one: Though, on the other hand, vice and folly may feem rather more inexcusable and shameful in the aged, than

they are in the young.

If a virtuous and religious life is, beyond all comparison, the most contented and happy one; then the earlier you enter upon such a life, the better it will be for you; the more peace and comfort, the more real satisfaction and pleasure you will enjoy in life. All the time that you continue strangers to wisdom and virtue, whether longer or shorter, you are putting a cheat upon, and defrauding yourselves: You deprive yourselves of that superior and substantial happiness, which slows from true religion; and subject yourselves to the many vexations, mischiefs, and uneasy apprehensions, which naturally attend folly and vice.

The fooner you become wife and virtuous, the more ferviceable you will be to the world; the better you will fill up your stations in life; the better you will answer the end of your creation, by doing good to your fellow-mortals. Society will be much more indebted and obliged to you, if you conduct yourselves properly from your youth up, than if you begin to do so, only as a kind of ceremony at parting, and taking

a final leave of it.

ALL the time you continue in the practice of fin, you are acting a most ungrateful and disingenuous part towards God, your Father Father in heaven, and Jesus Christ who died for you. You are all this time abusing the divine goodness and patience; and grieving the holy Spirit; good angels above, and good men below: And also gratifying your worst, your most implacable enemies, the devil and

his angels.

You are all this time also, acting a most. prefumptuous and audacious, as well as ungrateful part, towards your rightful Sovereign, the mighty God, the great and only Potentate. For you are all this while in a state of rebellion against Him, before whose throne the holy angels veil their faces, and prostrate themselves with the profoundest reverence; and at the very thought of whom, those apostate spirits who are in exile from heaven, tremble, and are horribly afraid.— So that in short, it seems you have neither the filial love and reverence of the great God, which good angels have; nor fo much awe and dread of his displeasure, as the angels of darkness. How astonishing then, is your ingratitude on one hand, and your audacity on the other; while you continue resolved and fearless in the violation of God's commandments!

REPENTANCE and reformation will, in all probability, be attended with more pain, anxiety and difficulty hereafter, than they would be at present; however you may flatter yourselves to the contrary. Sin gains strength by habit and custom; the longer it

is continued in, the more is the foul depraved, corrupted and enflaved thereby. The habits of fin are not so easily broken off, when they are old and inveterate, as when but newly contracted; as a confirmed tyranny in any nation, is harder to be broken than a novel and recent one. Agreeably whereto it is said in scripture, "Can the Æthiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? "Then may ye also that are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well." Which words, tho' they are not designed to affert the absolute impossibility of breaking off inveterate evil habits, do yet very strongly express the great and peculiar difficulty of it.

THE earlier you begin to be wife and virtuous, the more honor will, by your means, redound to God and religion. God is glorified by them that love and obey him, and order their conversation aright. The sooner therefore any begin to do so, the more they will glorify him. And ought you not, in all reason, as far as possible to honor the great and good God, your heavenly Father, who

daily loadeth you with his benefits?

THE sooner you begin to be sober-minded, the greater progress you will make in true wisdom, virtue and holiness; and the greater moral persection you will have attained to, when your lives shall come to a period. For true religion is in its nature progressive: It is like the light of the rising sun; which at first only glimmers faintly in the east; then over-

fpreads

fpreads the horizon, and " shineth more and

more unto the perfect day."

THE fooner you begin to serve God, and your generation according to his will; and the more perfect you are when you come to die in a good old age, the greater will be your reward and honor in the world to come. When all the righteous shall shine forth as the fun in the kingdom of their Father; you will appear with diffinguished lustre and glory, proportionably to the degree in which you excelled others on earth, honoured God more, and did more good in the world.

You will observe, my young brethren, that all the arguments here touched upon, are grounded upon the supposition, not only that you may probably, but certainly will be fober-minded hereafter, some time or other, tho' you should persevere a number of years longer in the practice of fin and folly. They are all strictly conclusive, even upon this sup-

position.

BUT I must now remind you, that this supposition is at best a very precarious one. You may have no more disposition, no more inclination to, no more taste for, wisdom and virtue in old age, than you have now in your youth. Or rather, your aversion thereto may probably be increased instead of lessened; tho' you feem to take it for granted, that wisdom and sobriety will come of course with years and age. This is one of the many devices of Satan, of which you ought not to be ignorant.

ignorant. You will naturally grow more hardened by continuing in fin, as was intimated before. God may withdraw those restraints, and kind influences of his Spirit, which you now in some measure enjoy; and give you up entirely to your own hearts luft.— How many persons are there who, tho' they had many checks of conscience in youth, and a tenderness of heart in some degree; yet, when they come to middle or old age, appear to be quite hardened and stupissed; to have lost almost all sense of moral good and evil, and are become profane scoffers at religion? There are not a few examples of this fort in the world. You fee then, that men do not always grow wifer and better, but often wax worse and worse, with years. And what evidence? what rational grounds have you to conclude, that this will not be your own case, should you now in youth stifle the convictions of your own minds; and refift and quench the good Spirit of God, which is striving with you? You have no fort of evidence, however confident you may be, that you shall not be thus left of God; as many others apparently are.

CONSIDER, in the next place, that while you delay to fear and ferve God, you are continually adding to the number of your fins, much too great already! and increasing your guilt every day you live. For there is no medium betwixt doing right and wrong; betwixt ferving God, and ferving the devil and

and your lufts. If you do not the former, you will do the latter. And besides; your fins will not only become more numerous, but more aggravated, with your years; being committed against more light and knowledge, than those of your childhood were.

AGAIN: Consider, that if you should die at last in your fins, in a wicked old age; as is not improbable, if you should live to be old, your future condemnation will be fo much the more aggravated; and your punishment in the other world proportionably the greater. You are treasuring up wrath to yourselves, against the day of wrath. And the longer you live, if you should at last perish in your fins, the worse it will be for you. It is faid, not without a particular emphasis, that " the sinner of an hundred years old, shall be accurfed." In which refpect, there have doubtless been many persons who, instead of having eventually any cause for rejoicing that they lived fo long, have rather had cause to wish that they had been " as an hidden untimely birth; as infants " which never faw the light!"

You will take notice, my young brethren, that every one of the foregoing arguments proceeds upon the supposition, that you will actually live to be old men! Even taking that for granted, there is not one of them but what is absolutely conclusive in favour of being fober-minded in youth. How strong then, is the practical conclusion which results

from them all in conjunction!

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But I must now remind you, in the last place, that the forementioned supposition of your living till you are old, is much too favourable for you: It is a precarious, unfupported hypothesis; such an one as no person of the least prudence or discretion would build upon, especially when there is such an interest at stake. Will you boast yourselves of many years to come, or even of to-morrow, when you "know not what a day may bring forth"? What a strange infatuation is this, however common! How many millions of millions of persons younger than you, are already numbered with the dead in the dust of the earth, not to arife again till these heavens are no more? How many of the companions of your childhood, of your friends, relations, and perhaps brethren and fifters, born after, are gone before you? (For in this fense, as well as in divers others, "the first are often last, and the last first.") Some of whom were perhaps taken away by a fudden violent stroke, without previous warning; and whose lives having been among the unclean, it were needless to say, that their death was not with the pure and holy, nor their portion with the bleffed. Now, have you any affurance that you shall not yourselves be thus fuddenly fnatched out of the world, while you are dreaming about being fober-minded twenty or thirty, forty or fifty years hence; when you have fufficiently fatigued yourselves in the service of Satan and your lusts! Has the

the God of your lives ?-has He in whose hand your breath is, and whose are all your ways, ever told you, that dust and worms shall not cover you before grey hairs appear upon you? You may be in the place of torment many years before the time comes, which you allot for reformation!

Not one of you, however healthy, strong and flourishing, tho' like a green bay tree in its prime, has any fecurity that he shall not be fuddenly cut down. For behold, even "now the axe is laid to the root of the trees;" and it cannot be long before " every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire." Young and tender sapplings fall more easily than trees come to maturity, and to a proper confistence of parts: A small stroke may lay them level with the earth. Yea, they may be mown down as the grafs, and the flower of the field, " which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven:" Nor are they so green, or full of fap, but that a fire may be found fierce enough to burn them-In the language of the book of Job, "Man that is born of a woman, is of few days-He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down: He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." In the language of Mofes, we are " like grafs which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening, it is cut down and withereth. - We spend our years as a tale that is told." In the language of David, " every Y 2

" every man at his best effate, is altogether vanity." In the language of Solomon, "Whatfoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work — in the grave whither thou goest-For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net," &c. And again, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not." - In the language of St. Peter, "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man, as the flower of grass: The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever. " And in the words of St. James, well worthy the attention of all, and particularly of those of you, who are warmly engaged in worldly business, trafic and merchandize; "Go to now, ye that fay, To-day or to-morrow, we will go into fuch a city, and continue there a year, and buy and fell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

You fee then, my young brethren, the infinite importance, not only in general of being fober-minded, but of being fo immediately, without any delay; as for many other reasons that have been mentioned, so particularly for this, that you have no security for another day, hour or moment. This being the case, how extremely soolish and dangerous is it to depend upon living many

years!

years! To day then, as the holy Ghost saith, even while it is called to day, harden not your hearts; lest to-morrow should not be a day of salvation, but of perdition to you! O that you were all wise; that you understood this, and duly considered your latter end! If you knew how stail you are, and numbered your days aright, it would be morally impossible for you, not to apply your hearts to that salutary wisdom and sobriety, to which you are exhorted.

It may be useful to you, my young brethren, if I here subjoin some short counsels and cautions of a mixed nature; tho' divers of them may perhaps be near akin to some that are contained in the foregoing discourses; and others only prudential. And,

1. BEWARE of irreligious, deistical books and men; lest you should be deluded by them to your ruin. Some there are in all ages, who, like the old serpent, tho' far less subtle, " lye in wait to deceive." There are many, who being either men of grofly depraved and profligate morals, cannot endure the restraints of religion; or else men of uncommon pride, affectation and vanity, fet themfelves up as champions for infidelity. Thefe latter, not knowing how to diftinguish themselves as their ambition prompts them, by fair and laudable means, engage warmly in this black cause of impiety; assuming to themselves the airs and importance of men of uncommon Y 3

2. GIVE

uncommon penetration and fagacity, merely on the credit of affecting to know more than others, and of contradicting what all the wifest and best men in the world have believed. And how very knowing and learned must these gentlemen be, who have clearly discovered the errors and delutions at least, perhaps the knavery of those persons, who have been in all ages the most celebrated for wisdom, virtue and piety! What profound geniuses? what enlightened, clarified and fublime fouls must these sages have, who have so clearly detected the imposture, or the folly and gross ignorance of Moses, Solomon and the prophets; of LESUS CHRIST and his apostles; of all our Boyles, Lockes, Clarkes, Newtons, Butlers, Hoadleys, Chandlers, Sherlocks, &c. &c. ? These must be very sagacious gentlemen indeed! And how benevolent, magnanimous and glorious their attempts to undeceive mankind, and to deliver the world from the errors, the fuperflitions, and monstrous notions about religion, taught by fuch persons!—What an ample field was here for the heroic exploits, and imaginary triumphs of vanity in a Collins, a Woolston and a Tindal; in a Shaftsbury and a Morgan, a Chub and a Bolinbroke?—But it is, in effect, of fuch men as these, of their sophistical writings, declamations and documents; that Solomon counsels you to beware, faying, "Cease, my Son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."

2. GIVE your minds and attention chiefly to plain things in religion; to the obvious doctrines and duties of it; fuch as are indifputable, and fuch as almost all christians are, and ever were agreed in. For these are, without doubt, of the greatest importance; and on the belief and practice of them, more especially, does your present and future happiness depend. It cannot be supposed, that the allwife, good and merciful God, has made the eternal salvation of men depend upon niceties; upon abstrufe speculations, or things difficult to be understood. History informs us that Caligula, one of the most cruel and infamous of the Roman Emperors, commanded his edicts, laws and orders to be written in fuch fmall, obscure characters, and then fixed up fo high, that it was next to impossible for people in general to read and understand them, that they might know his Majesty's pleasure. This he is said to have done, on purpose to ensnare his subjects; that he might have an opportunity to embrue his hands in their blood as malefactors, under color of law and justice. It is faid of Basilides, another infamous tyrant, that he would often impose the most unreasonable and impracticable commands on his subjects; for example, that he would require One to bring him a pint, or large quantity of his sweat in a vessel, on a cold frosty morning; and another, to bring him a great number of fleas chained together in a particular manner, at a feafon, Y 4 or

or in a country, wherein no fleas were to be found; and the like: And then put them to death for disobedience. It is said of Procrustes, an infamous robber and petty tyrant, that he would, with great apparent kindness, condescention and humanity, invite people to lodge at his palace, or castle: And then cut off the feet and legs of some who were too tall, and stretch and torture others who were too short, to make them just as long as the bed prepared for them. Now, the reprefentations often given us of God's dealings with men, suppose him to be really no better than an almighty Caligula, Basilides or Procrustes; or rather, to have all their particular bad qualities, and peculiar caprices united in himself. Thus do some, tho' I hope ignorantly, blaspheme the all-wife, good and merciful God! Be all fuch impious conceptions of him far from you, as it is from the Almighty that he should do wickedly, or pervert justice and judgment! You may be affured that all of you, who fincerely defire to know and to do his will, in order to your eternal happiness, may both know and do it, as far as is necessary to that end, by means of the light, help and grace which he affords to them that feek him. The truth and will of God, as far as your falvation is concerned in knowing it, is not obscurely or darkly, but clearly revealed; fo that "he that runs may read:" And the path of life, to an honest mind, is fo plain, that " the way-faring men, tho'

tho' fools, can hardly err therein." There are however, doubtless, some things in the word of God, " hard to be understood." Neither, when I advise you to attend chiefly to those that are plain and easy, do I mean that you should not, as far as may be, acquaint yourselves with the whole truth revealed; " that ye may stand perfect, and

complete in the will of God."

3. You should always interpret the more obscure and difficult parts of scripture, in confistence with those that are plain. You should rather forever confess your ignorance of the former, than understand them in a sense repugnant to the latter; and then torture these plain ones, to make them agree with obscure ones misunderstood. This has been a very common practice; particularly in some famous theological controversies that might be mentioned: In which fome zealous champions for unfcriptural mysteries, have indeed fhewn a wonderful dexterity at "darkening counsel by words without knowledge."

4. If any of you should have leifure and inclination to acquaint yourselves with the state of those controversies, which now subfift in the christian world; whether concerning doctrines, modes of worship, or ecclefiastic order and polity; you should do it rather with a view to your private information and fatisfaction, and for the regulation of your own conduct, than that you may be qualified for holding a disputation upon these subjects. At least, if you should acquire any skill or ability in controversy, which is a kind of fencing, and fometimes even among the zealous fathers of the church, ended in murderous thrusts and blood: I say, if you should acquire any skill in this art, you should rather use it only upon occasion, in your own necessary defence when attacked, (as honest and peaceable men fometimes do fwords) than carry it about with you to affail, or terrify others. It is feldom that any good, and often that much mischief, comes of this kind of controversy; whether you call it playing, fencing or fighting: And, to " shew out of a good conversation your works with meekness of wisdom," will be much more to your honor and advantage, than the greatest reputation you can possibly obtain in this way.

5. If you should happen to differ in opinion in some respects, from most of those among whom you live; a degree of caution and referve may be prudent, expedient, and not inconfistent with christian simplicity, or godly fincerity: Especially if the difference is not very important in its nature. Men in a private station, and particularly young men, have no call to tell the whole world their particular opinions; and much less, to make it a bufiness to dispute about them. By doing so, fome have hurt their own interest very essentially, without doing the least good to others: Especially in times and places, wherein bigotry, a party-spirit, enthusiasm and censorioufness

ousness have prevailed. You will find this very falutary counsel, if it should bereafter be your lot to live in any country, where fuch an abominable, antichristian spirit in the common people, is rather encouraged than difcountenanced by many persons in authority, and by numbers of the leading clergy ;-by fome, thro' ignorance, and a zeal not according to knowledge; and by others, from political, avaritious and worldly motives: Neither of which is an uncommon cafe in this evil world—But it is not the intent of any thing which I have faid, to advise you against ever entring into conversation upon disputed points. Occasionally to open your minds freely, and to discourse upon them with people of candor and moderation, whom you know; not in the controversial way, for vanity or victory, but merely for the fake of receiving or giving information: This, I fay, may be at once very agreeable and edifying to you. But remember, there are comparatively but few persons, to whom your minds can be thus laid open, with prudence and fafety. And therefore,

6. AT all times avoid, as far as possible, entering into any kind of religious dispute with a hot enthusiast, or with any of those persons, whose brains are half turned with fystematical divinity; and whose angry passions are apparently engaged in defending the jargon, either of ancient fymbols, or of more modern confessions of faith; all, of human invention, and fome of them antiferiptural.

Would

Would you think either to convince such men, "foaming out their own shame," or even to allay their intemperate heat, clamor and railing, by reasoning with them; - by sober argument!- At least, first try your talent at reasoning some other way. For example: try it first on a whirlwind; then on the cataracts of Niagara, and next on the fiery eruptions of Vesuvius, Stromboli and Ætna. If the experiment succeeds; if you can sufpend the fury and rage of all these, by the force of your reasoning; you will then have fome encouragement to make trial of it upon fuch men as the foaming enthusiast, and the flaming bigot; otherwise it is best for you to leave them to God, and endeavour to be, and keep fober yourselves.

7. Avoir all oftentation in religion. Do nothing from a spirit of vain-glory; especially nothing that has any relation to religion; but every thing, in lowliness of mind. Neither affect to appear righteous unto men; but endeavour to do your duty in all respects, as in the sight of God who trieth your hearts.

"Be not righteous over-much; neither make
yourselves over-wise: why should you defroy yourselves?" * Every thing that is
shewy, affected and oftentatious in religion;
or done with an apparent design to make
people think the doer very scrupulous, conscientious, and eminently pious, is highly
disgussful to persons of true wisdom and pe-

netration;

^{*} Eccl. VII. 17.

netration; and, which is far more, highly offensive to God, who dwelleth with, and delighteth in, them that are of a lowly,

humble and contrite spirit.

8. On the other hand, beware of false fhame and modesty; a common vice; and none of the least. People are often ashimed of their duty; fometimes, only lest fools should laugh at and deride them for doing it; and fometimes, perhaps, lest others should think they have not shame and modesty enough. To be ashamed, in any case, of what is right and fit to be done, and from that principle to omit it, is real impudence, and of the worst kind; because it is offending God, through bashfulness with regard to man. To be fure, never be ashamed of your Saviour, " or of his words; " but confess both before men on all proper occasions; left he should also be athamed of you, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

9. REST not fatisfied with any profession of religion, or in any superficial reformation of manners: Rest in nothing short of Jesus Christ, thro' faith that worketh by love, and which connotes that new birth, and new creature, spoken of inscripture. Every thing short of this, will leave you destitute of christian fobriety; and therefore, in a state of sin, guilt and death. Besides: Unseigned faith in Christ as the redeemer of sinners, purity of heart, and a supreme love to God, are necessary in order to your having any true de-

light

light in his service, and enjoying the comforts of religion, or of the Holy Ghost, in this world. Religion will be rather a burthen, an uneafy restraint to you, than your happiness and delight, if you have no more of it than the form. She bestows not her comforts, her divine joys, but on them that fincerely love her, embrace her with their whole heart, and yield themselves up unreservedly to her heavenly influence and power. So long as your hearts are divided betwixt God and the world, they will be miferably torn and tortured; you will be in doubts, in fears and darkness. But once give up all; once renounce every thing that stands in competition with God, and refolve to follow the Lamb " whither foever he goeth;" then will you indeed find rest unto your souls. eye being thus fingle, your whole body shall be full of light; your souls, of heavenly peace, hope and comfort.

10. KEEP a particular watch and guard upon your own iniquity; upon the fin that most easily besets you, upon your constitutional, and most beloved lust. All people in general have, either originally from nature, or from the circumstances of their education, employment, or station in life, some fuch favourite lust or passion; which is to them as a right hand, or a right eye: They know not how to part with it, till they are born of the Spirit; fo dear it is to them. And even then, it is not always fo far conquered quered, as to be upon the same level with other vices. The dethroned tyrant, that once reign'd without controul, loses not all his power at once; but often struggles to regain his former empire in the heart. In some perfons this tyrant is anger, in others envy, in others avarice, in others vanity or pride, in others uncleanness, in others intemperance in meat and drink; and fo on. And whatever your own predominant passion is, you are respectively to keep a particular eve upon it. Till you have in some good measure got the mastery of it, you are not to imagine yourfelves christians: This is your particular trial, and a touch-stone of your fincerity towards. God.

But to draw near to the conclusion of this discourse and subject together: I have, in the simplicity of my heart, been taking confiderable pains to give you fuch instructions, counfels and warnings; and to lay before you such motives to sobriety, as are agreeable to the word of God; all, with a fincere view to your temporal and eternal good. I have borne it upon my own mind all along, that I am accountable to God for whatever I deliver to you as his word and will, and your duty to believe and practife: And that, if I wilfully or knowingly deliver to you any thing contrary thereto, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men; I do it at the utmost peril of my own perdition. Let me remind you, on the other hand, my young brethren.

brethren, that you are also accountable to God, our common Sovereign, for the reception which you give to his word and commandments, made known to you; and, that if you wilfully difregard or neglect them, your peril will be equally great. I therefore befeech, as well as exhort you, to be foberminded. You will, probably, be either the better or the worse in the end, for my discourses to you upon this subject: Which of them it shall be, depends, under God, upon yourselves; upon your remembring and obferving, or forgetting and neglecting, what has been faid to you agreeably to the holy fcriptures. And, from the general, and apparently ferious attention which you have given, there feems to be more ground to hope the former, than to fear the latter: God grant, that the event may confirm, and eternally justify these hopes!

BEFORE Him, the great, the all-knowing, impartial and almighty Judge of all, both you the hearers, and I the speaker, must e'er long appear, to give an account of ourselves respectively. We shall all, at the appointed time, appear before the tribunal of Jesus Christ: For God hath "appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righte-ousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." I am certain, that in that great day, I shall not be condemned by him for any wilful perversion of his gospel, either in my discourses on this.

his

this, or on any other subject; my own confcience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that in this respect at least, I am innocent; clear from the blood of you and all men. whether old or young. See, my beloved brethren, See that you give such a reception to the real, the undoubted doctrines and precepts of the gospel, that you may, in respect of your own practice, have the like comfortable witness of your conscience, and boldness in the day of judgment; lest, otherwise, you should be condemned with the world. Great will be your guilt, heavy your condemnation, inexpressible your misery, if you should persevere in sinning against light, conviction of the truth, and the dictates of your own consciences! Glorious will be your recompence of reward at last, if you believe the word of God, and keep it.

YET a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Methinks, almost, I already see the heavens which have received him, opening, and the Son of man descending in great power and glory! the judgment fet! the books opened! the dead raifed! the righteous appearing with ineffable joy and triumph; the wicked with unutterable woe and anguish! both presaging, beyond the possibility of a doubt, what their fentence will respectively be !—O, my young brethren, where will you? — where shall I be found, when this great day of the Lord arrives ?-a day fo glorious to them that love his appearing; fo dreadful to them that hate him, and disobey his commandments!

LET me conclude with expressing the sentiments and defires of my heart, respecting both you and myself, in a short prayer to Him that heareth prayer; as follows.

Тной, of whom, and thro' whom, and to whom are all things; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named! O, gracioully behold these young men before thee; from the womb ignorant of, and therefore estranged from thee: But yet thy offspring; formed by thy hand, animated by thy breath, and enlightened with a ray from the fountain of light in thee; born under the common law of mortality, thro' the offence of One, and naturally subject to the bondage of corruption; born to die in a few days, and yet to live forever; encompassed always with thy presence, upheld by thy power, and living only in and by thee.

GREAT Creator and Father of all! who despisest not the work of thine own hands; Thou who didst fashion them so wonderfully in the womb, and take them from it to behold the light! even thou hast also nourished them and brought them up as children, fince they first hung upon their mothers breasts. Thou hast delivered them from many evils, and

shielded

shielded them from unnumbered dangers, thro' the feeble states of infancy and childhood. Thou, on whom all eyes wait, who hearest the young ravens when they cry, and before whom not a sparrow is forgotten: Thou hast fupplied their natural wants from thy stores and treasures, with a bountiful, a paternal hand; and madest provision for their deliverance from fin and death, and for their eternal happiness, even before thou gavest them their being. In the fulness of time, according to thy gracious promise of old, thou didst fend forth thy Son, made and born of a woman; who, by thy grace, hath tafted death for every man, to redeem them that were under the law; and that we finners of the gentiles might also receive the adoption of fons. From children they have had an opportunity to know the holy scriptures, which testify of thy Son, and which are able to make them wife unto falvation, thro' faith which is in him.

ORIGHTEOUS Father! they have indeed creed from thy ways; they have finned, they have rebelled against thee. O give them now repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. May they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, to the obtaining life eternal. Wherein they have erred from thy righteous paths, forgive, O most merciful Father! forgive them, thro' the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

7. 2

Remember

Remember not against them the sins of their youth; for childhood and youth are vanity. Father forgive them; for they knew not what they did! Thou confiderest their frame, thou rememberest that they are dust; and art not strict to mark iniquity. Thou hast faid by the mouth of thine holy apostles, that thou wilt have all men to be faved; and art not willing that any should perish, but that all should come unto repensance; that they may receive the remission of fins, thro' Him that died for all, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; and who is able to fave them unto the uttermost that come unto God by him, feeing he ever liveth to make intercettion for them.

O HOLY Father! may these young men be fanctified through thy truth; thy word is truth. Cleanse them throughly from their fins, from all unrighteoufness, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, in the pure, the hallowed fountain which thou hast opened. May they be holy, and without blame before thee in love, being followers of thee as dear children the remainder of their days on earth; that they may be heirs of God, and jointheirs with Jesus Christ, whom thou hast appointed heir of all things.

O Thou who wast, and art, and art to come; the same from everlasting to everlasting! behold, thou hast made their days as an handbreadth, and their age is as nothing before thee. Cause them therefore, whose life is as

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a vapour, as a flower, as a post that hasteth by; O cause them to know their end, and the measure of their days what it is; that, considering how frail they are, they may remember thee in the days of their youth; that they may even now apply their hearts unto wisdom, and for the time to come, be sober-

minded according to thy word.

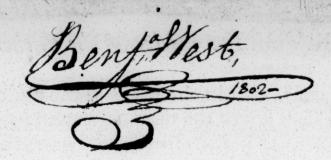
FATHER of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning; Eternal Source of truth and love! thy unworthy fervant hath declared thy love and thy truth unto them, that they might both know and love thee. He hath fown, not perishing or corruptible, but the incorruptible feed; even thy word, O Lord, which liveth and abideth forever. Though fown in weakness, may it be faised in power! Thou alone givest the increase, whosoever soweth, or planteth, or watereth. O cause this good feed, tho' fo unskilfully fown, to take deep and effectual root in all their hearts, however hard any of them may be, thro' the deceitfulness of sin; that it may spring up speedily, and grow, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear, a goodly and plenteous harvest of the fruit of righteoufness, to the glory of thy great name by Jefus Christ; to their own peace, honor and happiness here, and to their eternal felicity in thy kingdom which is above.

PERFECT the good work already begun in any of them, unto the day of Christ: Keep them

them from falling, that they may in due time appear in thy glorious presence with exceeding joy. And grant, O heavenly, most holy and most gracious Father! grant that thy unworthy fervant, having preached to others, may not himself be a cast-away! May he with them, tho' fo unworthy of thy favourable regards, yet thro' thy unutterable love and grace in Christ Jesus, be found at last at his right hand, whom thou hast made the Lord and Judge of all. With them, and with thy unworthy, tho' not wholly unfaithful fervant, it is a very small thing that they should be judged of man's judgment, or have their names cast out as evil: He that judgeth them, and all, whose judgment is at once true, impartial and decifive, is the Lord.

In that great day, therefore, O my God! when the stars of heaven shall fall to the earth, even as a fig-tree shaketh her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind; when the heavens shall depart as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island shall be moved out of their places; when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man; when all who have killed, perfecuted, or maliciously condemned the just; when all who have rejected and disobeyed thy facred word, or knowingly perverted it, thro' the love or fear of this prefent world, shall hide themselves in the

the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and shall fay to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that fitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: In that great day, O my God! may thy most unworthy servant, may these young men, may all that are here affembled in thy house of prayer, of whatever age, sex or degree, having believed and obeyed thy truth in simplicity, the truth as it is in Jesus, have great peace and boldness! May even the least of them have then no occasion to "hide. " themselves in the dens and in the rocks of " the mountains; or to fay to the mountains, " and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from " the face of him that fitteth upon the throne, " and from the wrath of the Lamb!" O grant that, in that day, the least as well as greatest of us may lift up our heads with joy; knowing that He who loved us, and whom not having before feen we loved, together with our complete redemption, is come: And may, with the general affembly, the church of the first born, and the innumerable company of angels, with loud, joyful and triumphant voices, afcribe bleffing, and honor, and glory, and power unto Him that fitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. For worthy, OGREATEST and BEST of Beings! Worthy is the Lamb that was flain, and hath redeemed us unto God by his blood, to receive power, and riches, and wifdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and bleffing. AMEN!



CORRECTIONS.

Page,	line,	from,	read,
L 24	3	top	of the truth.
- 65	15	top	" gather together
81	13	bottom	PREACHER
L94	8	bottom	on the
4 102	14	bottom	Indeed, in any
L 124	4	top	shall he not hear
L 128	Margin, last lir	ie,	before the time of Moses.
W135	20	bottom	fays ver. 7. [dele and]
L 142	12	top	to hear
L146	Margin 6	bottom	perfecutors
L169	9	bottom	folly, impudence
L 172	16	bottom	that must be,
L 220	9	top	beafts
L 237	8	top	you fee a
m252	4	bottom	that it is holy
L 283	15	bottom	grateful reception
4 285	5	top	felf-destroyed

Some flips in the spelling and pointing are omitted.

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